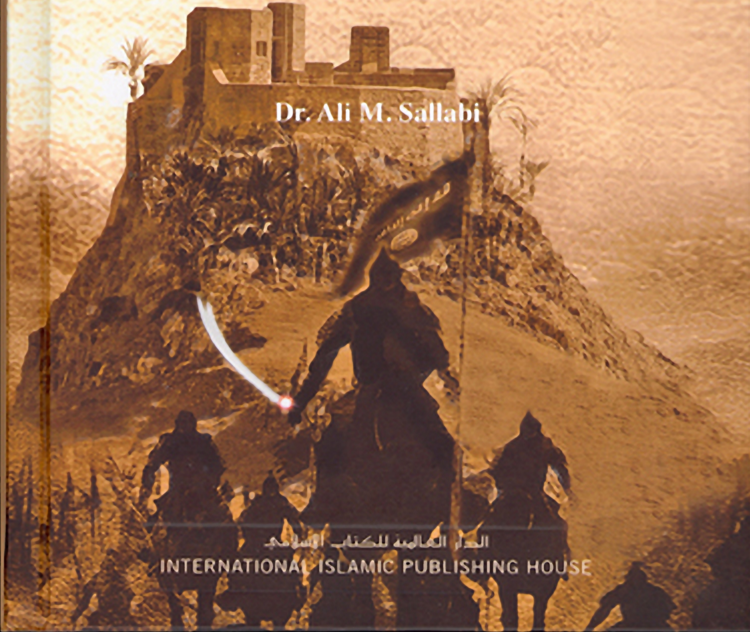
ISLAMIC HISTORY SERIES PART III

THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS 3

'ALI IBN ABI TÂLIB

علي بن أبي طالب

Volume Two



Dr. Ali M. Sallabi

الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC PUBLISHING HOUSE

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib

VOLUME TWO

علي بن أبي طالب

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Translated by

Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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Contents of Volume 2

Arabic honorific symbols used in this book

(سبحانه وتعالى) : *Subḥânahu wa ta'âla* — "The Exalted"

(صلى الله عليه وسلم) : *Ṣalla-Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* — "Blessings and peace be upon him"

(عليه السلام) : *'Alayhis-salâm* — "May peace be upon him"

(رضي الله عنه) : *Raḍiya-Allâhu 'anhu* — "May Allah be pleased with him"

(رضي الله عنها) : *Raḍiya-Allâhu 'anha* — "May Allah be pleased with her"

Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
أ	short 'a', as in *cat*	a
آ – ى	longer 'a', as in *cab* (not as in *cake*)	â
ب	/b/ as in *bell*, *rubber* and *tab*	b
ت	/t/ as in *tap, mustard* and *sit*	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diactrical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih, or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when in uninterrupted speech	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in *thing*, *maths* and *wealth*	th
ج	/j/ as in *jam*, *ajar* and *age*	j
ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	ḥ
خ	as in *Bach* (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh
د	/d/ as in *do*, *muddy* and *red*	d
ذ	as in *this, father*, and *with*	dh
ر	/r/ as in *raw*, *art* and *war*; may also be a rolled r, as with Spanish words	r

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
ز	/z/ as in *zoo*, *easy* and *gaze*	z
س	/s/ as in *so*, *messy* and *grass*	s
ش	as in *ship*, *ashes* and *rush*	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ṣ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /d/ farther back in the mouth	ḍ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /t/ farther back in the mouth	ṭ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth	<u>dh</u>
ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	'
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /r/ in 'rouge'	gh
ف	/f/ as in *fill*, *effort* and *muff*	f

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in *king*, *buckle* and *tack*	k
ل	/l/ as in *lap*, *halo*; in the word *Allah*, it becomes velarized as in *ball*	l
م	/m/ as in *men*, *simple* and *ram*	m
ن	/n/ as in *net*, *ant* and *can*	n
هـ - ه - ـه	/h/ as in hat; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in *wet* and *away*	w
و (as a vowel)	long u, as in *boot* and *too*	oo
ي	as in *yet* and *yard*	y
ي (as a vowel)	long e, as in *eat*, *beef* and *see*	ee
ء	glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of *butter*: *bu'er*, or the stop sound in *uh — oh!*	' (Omitted in initial position)

Diphthongs:

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
أَوْ ، وْ	Long o, as in *owe, boat* and *go*	au, aw, ow
أَيْ ، يْ	Long 'a', as in *able*, *rain* and *say*	ay, ai, ei

Diacritical marks (tashkeel):

Name of mark	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
ـَ fatḥah	very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel)	a
ـِ kasrah	shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel)	i
ـُ Dammah	shorter version of oo	u
ـّ shaddah	a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled	Double letter
ـْ sukoon	no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word	Absence of vowel

About the word 'Lord'

The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is 'master' or 'ruler', and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: 'the lord of the mansion' or 'Lord So-and-So' (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God-Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah — not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor

CHAPTER SIX

The Battles of the Camel and Ṣiffeen, and the Issue of Arbitration

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴾If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair [and just]. The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two [contending] brothers: And fear Allah that ye may receive Mercy.﴿

(Qur'an 49: 9-10)

It was narrated that Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) said: "It was said to the Prophet (ﷺ): 'Why don't you go to Abdullah ibn Ubayy (to persuade him to accept Islam)?' So he went to him, riding a donkey, and the Muslims set out too, and (they passed over) saline ground. When the Prophet (ﷺ) came to him, he said: 'Do not come near me, for by Allah the stench of your donkey offends me.' One of the Anṣâr said: 'By Allah (ﷻ), the donkey of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) smells better than you do.' One of Abdullah's people got angry on his behalf, then the two groups got angry with one another and hit each another with palm branches, hands and shoes. We heard that the following words were revealed concerning them: ﴾If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them.﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 9)*"[1]

It was narrated from al-Ḥasan, from 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥah, from Ibn 'Abbâs concerning that verse, ﴾If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah,﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 9)* that Allah (ﷻ) commanded the Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers that if two groups among the believers fight, they should call them to the ruling of Allah and reach a fair deal between them. If they respond, then they should be judged in accordance with the Book of Allah, so that the group that was wronged may settle scores with the group that wronged them. If they refuse to comply, then they have committed a transgression, and it is the duty of the leader of the believers to fight them until they comply with the command of Allah and accept His ruling.[2]

The words of Allah (ﷻ), ﴾If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them﴿ mean that the people in authority must try to reconcile between them by advising them and calling them to the rule of Allah (ﷻ), discussing with them and trying to remove any misunderstanding and causes of dispute. The word 'if' serves to point out that it is not proper for fighting to take place between the Muslims; if it happens, it is something very rare. This verse is addressed to the people in authority, and the order is binding.[3] (Bukhari and others quoted this verse as evidence that no matter how great a sin may be, it does not put one beyond the pale of Islam;[4] this is contrary to the opinion of the Kharijites, who said that the one who commits a major sin is a disbeliever who will be in hell.) It is recorded in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari* that Abu Bakrah[5] (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave a speech one day, and with him on the minbar was al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). The Prophet (ﷺ) started looking from him to the people, and he said: 'This son of mine is a leader, and perhaps Allah will reconcile two great groups of the Muslims through

him.'"[6] It occurred as he said; through him, Allah (ﷻ) brought about reconciliation between the people of Syria and the people of Iraq, after the battles that took place between them.[7]

The words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾But if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah﴿, mean that if one of the two groups transgressed and violated the rights of the other, and then they do not pay attention to the rulings of Allah or to advice, then the Muslims have to fight them until they come back to the ruling of Allah (ﷻ). The instruction in this verse of not transgressing or fighting is applicable whether that is done with or without weapons. The mediator who tries to reconcile between the two sides should do whatever is needed to achieve the goal, as long as it is in accordance with the command of Allah. If the goal can be achieved without resorting to the use of weapons, then that is the best solution; if there is no other option than using force, then he should do that until they comply.

The words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾But if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair [and just]﴿, mean that if the group that is wrong gives up its transgression, after fighting, and accepts the command and rule of Allah, then the Muslims must be fair when judging between the two groups. They should judge in accordance with the ruling of Allah and put a stop to the abuse by the disobedient group; it must cease its transgression and give to the other group what is due, so that the fighting will not be resumed later. And be just, O you mediators, in judging between them, for Allah loves those who are just and gives them the best rewards. This is a command to be just in all matters.[8] The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Those who are fair and just will be with Allah on thrones of light, at the right hand of the Most Merciful (ﷻ), and both of His hands are right hands, those who are fair and just in their

rulings and towards their families and those who are under their authority."[9]

Then Allah enjoined reconciliation among the Muslims in cases other than fighting, even in the slightest dispute. He (ﷻ) said: ﴾The Believers are but a single Brotherhood, so make peace and reconciliation between your two [contending] brothers﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 10)*. This verse contains one of the basic principles that govern relationships between one Muslim and another.[10] Allah (ﷻ) did not say that either or both groups are disbelievers, even in a case where fighting occurs between them. The most deserving of people to be included in the meaning of this verse are the leaders of the believers, the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), whether that is with regard to the Battle of the Camel or Ṣiffeen. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) applied this verse as he strove to bring about reconciliation, and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr responded, but the followers of Abdullah ibn Saba' were the cause of the fighting that broke out between the two sides, as we will discuss below.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was also keen to set things straight with the people of Syria, and he did all that he could through peaceful means. However, Mu'âwiyah stipulated that the killers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) should be handed over, and fighting took place. Mu'âwiyah's opinion was mistaken; the correct view was that of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). He only unsheathed his sword after all attempts at reconciliation had failed, intending for Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) to follow the command of Allah (ﷻ) and hear and obey, and to bring about unity in the Muslim state.

The words of Allah (ﷻ), ﴾The Believers are but a single Brotherhood﴿ affirmed the brotherhood of faith among all the Muslims who are engaged in fighting each other. It is appropriate that this should be applicable to 'Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them all) in the Battle of the Camel and to what

happened with Mu'âwiyah at Ṣiffeen. Hence it becomes clear to us that the fighters at the Battle of the Camel and at Ṣiffeen were believers on both sides. These historical events should not be used as a pretext for undermining the position of the Companions, trying to deny that they were believers, or spreading distorted and fabricated stories about them. To refute those false notions concerning them, it is sufficient to note that this verse confirms that they were brothers in faith. We will discuss what happened between them in more detail below.

Allah (ﷻ) states that the believers are brothers in faith. They are united by a single principle, which is faith, so reconciling between two disputing brothers is necessary. To emphasise the importance of reconciling between two brothers, Allah (ﷻ) enjoined taqwa in this context. The basis of this attempt to reconcile, and in all your affairs, should be taqwa, demonstrated by adhering to truth and justice. Do not be biased, and do not incline to one of the two parties; they are all your brothers, and Islam treats all people equally, so there is no differentiation between them. Do that so that you may receive mercy because of piety, which means adhering to the commands and heeding the prohibitions.[11]

The verse states that reconciling between brothers and fearing Allah (ﷻ) is the cause of the mercy of Allah coming down, so this highlights the great importance of reconciliation between Muslims.[12] It may be noted that he said: Fear Allah when two men dispute; he did not say that with regard to reconciling between two Muslim groups, because when two men dispute, there is the fear that the conflict may widen, but when two groups dispute, the impact of the turmoil and mischief is already affecting everyone.[13]

In the verse, ﴾The Believers are but a single Brotherhood﴿, the Arabic word *innama* (translated here as 'but') is exclusive. It means that there is no brotherhood except among the believers; there is no

brotherhood between a believer and a disbeliever, because Islam is the bond that unites its followers. It also indicates that the command to reconcile is only issued because there is brotherhood in Islam and not among the disbelievers. If a disbeliever is a *dhimmi* or a person living under Muslim protection, then it is obligatory to take care of him, protect him and relieve him of oppression, just as it is obligatory to help the Muslim and support him in general if his opponent is a non-Muslim in a state of war against the Muslims.[14]

Ibn al-'Arabi said: "This verse is the main guideline when fighting Muslims who base their reasons for fighting on misinterpretations. It was a reference point for the Companions on this issue, and the Prophet (ﷺ) referred to it when he said: ' 'Ammâr (ibn Yâsir) will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,' meaning that fighting the group that is in the wrong is a communal obligation; if some of the Muslims undertake to do that, the obligation is waived from the rest. Hence some of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) stayed away from this matter, such as Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ, Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Muhammad ibn Maslamah and others. Each of them gave his apologies, and Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) accepted that from them."[15] There are many rulings that we will discuss when we look at the various events that took place among the Companions.

This system, of arbitration and fighting the group that is in the wrong until it complies with the command of Allah (ﷻ), is regarded as a pioneering system that came before other human attempts at setting up systems of that nature; it is perfect and free from the flaws and defects that are apparent in all imperfect and feeble human attempts. Moreover, it has the attributes of being clean, honest, just and universal, because referring to that system is like referring to something that is not affected by any ulterior motives or whims and desires, and is not affected by any shortcomings or defects.[16] The

attempts to bring about reconciliation did not cease from the moment fighting broke out until they were crowned by the great reconciliation that was planned by Amir al-Mu'mineen al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ).

1. Events that preceded the Battle of the Camel

The murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was a cause of many other difficulties, and it cast its shadow over the turbulent events that followed it. Many factors contributed to the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), including: prosperity and its impact on society; changes in the nature of society during his reign; the fact that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) came after 'Umar (ﷺ); the departure of the senior Companions from Madinah; tribalism; the cessation of conquest; ignorant displays of piety; personal ambitions on the part of some people; the conspiracy of those who were full of hate; careful preparation of a list of accusations against 'Uthmân (ﷺ); various ways and means that were used to stir up the people; and the role of Abdullah ibn Saba' in the turmoil. These causes and reasons have been discussed in detail in my book *Tayseer al-Kareem al-Mannân fi Seerat 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân*.[17]

The people loved 'Uthmân (ﷺ) very much because of his good conduct, his closeness to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the hadiths that praised him, and the fact that he married two of the Prophet's daughters (which is why he was called Dhun-Noorayn).[18] He was one of the senior Companions who were given the glad tidings of paradise. He was subjected to injustice during his lifetime by some of the thugs; he could have put an end to them, but he refrained for fear of being the first one to shed the blood of the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ). His policy in dealing with the turmoil was based on forbearance, deliberation and justice. He prevented the

Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) from fighting the rebels and chose to protect the Muslims by giving his own life. Hence his killing was the cause of a great deal more turmoil, and his murder cast a shadow on the subsequent turbulent events.

His killing had a great impact on the Muslims. The Muslim society fractured as a result of this major event, and the people became divided. What may increase his status and prove his innocence of everything that was attributed to him is the attitude of the other Companions towards his murder. They were all agreed that he was innocent and that those who shed his blood should be punished, but they differed as to how that was to be achieved. This will be discussed below, but first we want to shed some light on the role of Abdullah ibn Saba' in the turmoil in general:

1.1. Impact of the Saba'is in causing turmoil

1.1.1. The Saba'is – fact or fiction? The reality of Abdullah ibn Saba'

The early scholars were unanimous in agreeing that the Saba'is existed; there were no exceptions among them. A few modern scholars, most of whom are Shias, disagreed with that. They claimed that the Saba'is were a product of the imagination of Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tameemi. Some of the scholars of biography criticised Sayf in the field of hadith narration, but the scholars regard him as acceptable in the field of historical reports. Moreover, Ibn 'Asâkir narrated many reports that mention Abdullah ibn Saba', and these reports do not include Sayf ibn 'Umar as one of the narrators. Al-Albâni ruled that some of these reports were sound in terms of their chains of narration.[19] These are in addition to the many reports narrated from Ibn Saba' in the Shia books of sects, biographies and hadith, in which there is no mention of this Sayf ibn 'Umar at all.

Creating doubts about the existence of Abdullah ibn Saba' began with two purposes: on the one hand, to deny the role of the Jewish element in planting the seeds of turmoil among the Muslims, and on the other hand, to point the finger of accusation against the Companions. The rogue elements attempted to tarnish the bright image of the Companions in the minds of Muslims, by claiming that the Companions caused the turmoil. Some contemporary writers, all of whom were Râfiḍi Shias, followed in their footsteps and denied the existence of Abdullah ibn Saba' for their own purposes. These failed attempts were aimed at proving that their madh-hab had nothing to do with its real founder, contrary to the facts on which all earlier scholars, including the Shia, were agreed.

It is worth pointing out that those so-called Sunnis who denied the existence of Abdullah ibn Saba' were among those who were influenced by, or studied under, the Orientalists. What level of shamelessness and ignorance have these people reached? His biography filled books of history and Muslim sects, his deeds were transmitted by narrators and his story was known throughout the Muslim world. The historians, scholars of hadith and authors of books on sects and groups, biography, literature and genealogy who discussed the Saba'is were all unanimously agreed that the Abdullah ibn Saba' who appears in accounts of the turmoil was a real historical character. The reports of Ibn Saba's role in the turmoil are not limited to *Tareekh aṭ-Ṭabari* and are not based only on the reports of Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tameemi contained therein; there are widespread reports in the narrations of earlier scholars and throughout the books that record the events of Islamic history and discuss the views of different sects during that period. However, the advantage that Imam aṭ-Ṭabari had over others is that he had more abundant material and more details. Hence shedding doubts on these events without any evidence, on the grounds that Abdullah ibn Saba' is only mentioned

in reports via Sayf ibn 'Umar, even after it has been proved that he is mentioned in sound reports that do not include Sayf ibn 'Umar in their chains of narration, as we have mentioned above, only leads to rejecting all these reports and labelling those narrators and scholars as foolish people who are distorting the historical facts. Since when does an academic methodology based on pure rational thinking form a basis for rejection, as opposed to texts and corroborating reports? Is this methodology based on overlooking and ignoring all the sources, both earlier and later, which prove that Ibn Saba' was a real person?[20] Ibn Saba' is mentioned in many books of Ahl as-Sunnah, including the following:

The Saba'is are mentioned by A'sha Hamadân[21] (d. 83 AH). He lampooned al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafi and his supporters from Kufah, after he fled with the nobles of the tribes of Kufah to Basra, by saying: "I bear witness that you are Saba'is, and I am aware of you, O guardians of disbelief."[22]

There is a report from ash-Sha'bi (d. 103 AH/721 CE) saying that the first one who told lies was Abdullah ibn Saba'.[23] Ibn Ḥabeeb[24] (d. 245 AH/860 CE) mentioned Ibn Saba' and regarded him as one of the children of the Ethiopian women.[25] Abu 'Âṣim Khushaysh ibn Aṣram (d. 253 AH) narrated a report about 'Ali (ﷺ) burning some of the companions of Ibn Saba', in his book *al-Istiqâmah.*[26] Al-Jâḥidh[27] (d. 255 AH) is regarded as one of the first to refer to Abdullah ibn Saba',[28] but his report is not the first, as Dr. Jawâd 'Ali thinks.[29]

The story of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) burning a group of heretics is mentioned in sound reports that are narrated in the books of hadith.[30] There is nothing strange about using the word 'heretic' with regard to Abdullah ibn Saba' and his group. Ibn Taymiyah said: "The Râfiḍi ideas started with the heretic Abdullah ibn Saba'."[31] Adh-Dhahabi said: "Abdullah ibn Saba' was one of the extreme

heretics; he was misguided and misled others."[32] Ibn Ḥajar said: "Abdullah ibn Saba' was one of the extreme heretics... he had followers who were called Saba'is, who believed in the divinity of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ). 'Ali burned them with fire during his caliphate."[33]

Ibn Saba' is also mentioned in the books of hadith criticism. Ibn Ḥibbân (d. 354 AH) said: "Al-Kalbi, Muhammad ibn as-Sâ'ib al-Ikhbâri, was a Saba'i, one of the followers of Abdullah ibn Saba', one of those who said that 'Ali did not die and that he will come back to this world before the Hour begins. If they saw a cloud, they would say: 'The Amir al-Mu'mineen (meaning 'Ali) is in it.'"[34] The books of genealogy also confirm that the Saba'i group is named after Abdullah ibn Saba', and that they are a group of extreme Râfiḍis. Abdullah ibn Saba' was originally from Yemen, a Jew who became a Muslim outwardly. Sayf ibn 'Umar was not the only source for reports about Abdullah ibn Saba'. In his *Tareekh*, Ibn 'Asâkir narrated reports which have no connection to Sayf, which confirm the existence of Ibn Saba'.[35] Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728 AH) stated that the origins of the Râfiḍi sect lay with the hypocrites and heretics, and that it was the invention of the heretic Ibn Saba', who exaggerated about 'Ali (ﷺ), claiming that he should have been caliph, that he was appointed by a clear text, and that he was infallible.[36] Ash-Shâṭibi[37] (d. 790 AH) pointed out that the innovation of the Saba'is was one that had to do with belief in the existence of another god besides Allah (ﷻ), and this was an innovation that differed from others.[38] In *al-Khuṭaṭ* by al-Maqreezi (d. 845 AH), it says that Abdullah ibn Saba' appeared at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ), saying that 'Ali (ﷺ) was the rightfully appointed successor[39] and would return, and promoting belief in the transmigration of souls.[40]

The Shia sources which mention Ibn Saba' include the following:

Al-Kashshi narrated that Muhammad ibn Qawlawiyyah said: "Sa'd ibn Abdullah told me: Ya'qoob ibn Yazeed and Muhammad ibn 'Eesa told me, from 'Ali ibn Mahziyâr, from Faḍḍâlah ibn Ayyoob al-Azdi, that Abân ibn 'Uthmân said: I heard Abu Abdullah say: 'May Allah (ﷻ) curse Abdullah ibn Saba', for he claimed that ('Ali) was divine, but by Allah, ('Ali) was an obedient slave. Woe to the one who tells lies about us. If people say of us things that we do not say about ourselves, we disavow ourselves of them before Allah.'"[41] The chain of narration of this report is sound.[42]

In *al-Khiṣâl*, al-Qummi narrated the same report, but in connection with a different chain of narration. The author of *Rawḍât al-Jannât* mentioned Ibn Saba' in a quotation from Imam aṣ-Ṣâdiq, who cursed Ibn Saba' and accused him of lying, fabricating, broadcasting secrets and misinterpreting.[43] In his book, Dr. Sulaymân al-'Awdah mentioned a number of texts with which the Shia books are filled, and their reports from Abdullah ibn Saba', which are more akin to recorded documents that condemn anyone among the later Shia who tries to deny the existence of Abdullah ibn Saba' or shed doubt on the reports that refer to him on the basis of paucity or weakness of the reports.[44]

Ibn Saba' was an actual historical figure, concerning whom there is no confusion in either the Sunni or Shia sources, earlier or later. This is also the view of most of the Orientalists such as Julius Falhausen,[45] Van Fulton,[46] Levi de la Vida,[47] Goldziher,[48] Ronald Nicholson,[49] and Dwight Ronaldson.[50] For a few Orientalists such as Caetani and Bernard Lewis,[51] Ibn Saba' remains a doubtful figure or no more than a myth; Fred Lander remains uncertain.[52] However, we should remember that we do not rely on these authors with regard to our history.

The one who studies these sources, ancient and modern, Sunni and Shia, will be certain that Abdullah ibn Saba' really existed and

that his existence is supported by the historical reports. The books of 'aqeedah, hadith, biography, genealogy, literature and language also mention him a great deal. This idea was accepted by modern scholars and researchers. It seems that the first ones to shed doubt on the existence of Ibn Saba' were some of the Orientalists; then this doubt was shared by the majority of modern Shia, and some of them denied his existence altogether. Among modern Arab researchers, there were some who admired the ideas of the Orientalists and were influenced by the books of the modern Shia. Nevertheless, none of them has anything to support the suspicions and denials except doubt itself, which is based on whims and desires, speculations and assumptions.[53] Whoever wishes to find out more about the Sunni, Orientalist and Shia references which mention Ibn Saba' may refer to *Taḥqeeq Mawâqif as-Ṣaḥâbah fil-Fitnah* by Dr. Muhammad Amhazon and *'Abdullah ibn Saba' wa Atharuhu fi Aḥdâth al-Fitnah fi Ṣadr al-Islam* by Dr. Sulaymân ibn Ḥamad al-'Awdah.

1.1.2. The role of Abdullah ibn Saba' in stirring up fitnah

In the last years of 'Uthmân's caliphate, signs of trouble in the Muslim society began to loom on the horizon, due to the changes that we have listed previously. Some of the Jews seized this opportunity to stir up trouble, by using the tactic of taqiyyah and pretending to be Muslim. Among them was Abdullah ibn Saba', who is also known as Ibn as-Sawda'. We should not exaggerate his role in the fitnah, as some have done,[54] but we should not cast doubts on it either, or discount the role that he played. His role was only one of several factors, but it was the most prominent and the most dangerous. The atmosphere of turmoil paved the way for him, but there were other factors that helped him too. All that Ibn Saba' did was to spread views and beliefs that he fabricated himself. They reflected his

hateful nature, and he propagated them for his own purposes, namely to introduce new ideas into the Muslim society in order to destroy its unity and stir up unrest. He planted seeds of division among the people, and that was one of several factors that led to the murder of the caliph 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and the division of the Ummah into factions and parties.[55]

To summarize what he did, he began quoting correct ideas, but then he leapt to wrong conclusions that found acceptance among the simple-minded, the extremists and those who were swayed by whims and desires. He followed convoluted ways whereby he deceived those who gathered around him. He started quoting Qur'an and misinterpreting it in accordance with his false claims, like when he said: "It is strange that people believe that 'Eesa is coming back, but they do not accept that Muhammad is coming back, when Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿Verily, He Who has given you [O Muhammad] the Qur'an [i.e. ordered you to act on its laws and to preach it to others] will surely, bring you back to *Ma'âd* [place of return],﴾ *(Qur'an 28: 85)* and Muhammad is more deserving of coming back than 'Eesa."[56] He also resorted to false analogy in trying to claim that 'Ali (ﷺ) was the rightful heir appointed by the Prophet (ﷺ) to succeed him; he said: "There were one thousand prophets, and each prophet had a rightfully appointed heir, and 'Ali was the rightfully appointed heir of Muhammad." Then he said: "Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, and 'Ali was the seal of the heirs."[57]

When these ideas had become entrenched in the hearts of his followers, he moved on to his ultimate aim, which was to make the people rebel against the caliph 'Uthmân (ﷺ). That happened to coincide with the whims and desires of some of the people when he said to them: "Who does more wrong than the one who did not fulfil the final wishes of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who pushed aside 'Ali, the rightfully appointed successor of the Messenger of Allah

(ﷺ), and took control of the Ummah?" After that, he told them: " 'Uthmân took it unlawfully; here is the rightfully appointed successor of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Get up and do something about it. Start by criticising your governors, and pretend that you are enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, so that people will be inclined towards you, and call them to this matter."[58]

He sent out his agents, and he wrote to people in the regions, who were corrupted by his ideas; they wrote to him and propagated their views in secret, pretending to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. They started writing to people in the regions, mentioning the faults of their governors, and they corresponded with their counterparts in other regions, telling them what they were doing. They spread their false propaganda all over, aiming for something other than what they appeared to be seeking; they even sent letters to Madinah. The people in the regions said: "We are free of what others are suffering from," but the people of Madinah received letters from all over and said: "We are better off than the rest of the people."[59]

From this, we can see the methods followed by Ibn Saba'. He wanted to give the impression that there was a rift between two of the senior Companions by showing that one of them, 'Ali (ﷺ), had been deprived of his rights, whereas the other, 'Uthmân (ﷺ), was a usurper. Next, he tried to stir up the people against their governors, especially in Kufah, in the name of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil; as a result, they started to revolt against their governors for the slightest reasons. He focused on the Bedouin in this campaign, because he found in them suitable material for carrying out his plan. He gained the support of the religious people among them by using the idea of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. He gained the support of those who had worldly ambitions by means of false rumours against 'Uthmân (ﷺ), such as the claim that he was biased in favour of his relatives and was spending money

from the public treasury of the Muslims on them, that he had allocated grazing land for himself only, and other accusations and criticisms by means of which Ibn Saba' managed to rally the thugs against 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Then he started inciting his followers to send letters relaying terrible news about their cities to people in other provinces, so that people in all regions would think that the situation everywhere had gotten so bad that it could not get any worse. Those who benefited from this situation were the Saba'is, because when the people believed their propaganda, they would be able to light the spark of fitnah in the Muslim society.[60] 'Uthmân (ﷺ) realised that there were plots in other provinces, and that the Ummah was facing a bad time. He said: "By Allah, the millstone (of fitnah) will soon start turning, and it will be better for 'Uthmân if he dies and does not set it in motion."[61]

The place where Ibn Saba' found his niche was in Egypt. He started organizing his campaign against 'Uthmân (ﷺ) there, urging the people to go to Madinah and stir up unrest on the premise that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) had become caliph unlawfully by snatching it from 'Ali (ﷺ), who was the true heir of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).[62] He deceived them by means of letters that he claimed to have received from the senior Companions, inciting the people against 'Uthmân (ﷺ).[63] However, when the Bedouin came to Madinah and met with the Companions, they denied writing the letters that had been attributed to them, and the Bedouins did not receive any encouragement from them. They found that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) paid attention to the rights of others, and he debated with them concerning the accusations against him. He refuted their lies and explained that his deeds were based on sincere intentions, until one of these Bedouin, Mâlik ibn al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i, said: "Perhaps it is a plot that has been drawn up against him and you."[64]

Adh-Dhahabi is of the view that Abdullah ibn Saba' started the fitnah in Egypt, where he planted the seeds of grudges and criticism against the governors first, then against the ruler 'Uthmân.[65] Ibn Saba' was not alone; his agents were at work among the network of conspirators, using their craftiness and trickery to recruit the Bedouin, the religious people among them and others. Ibn Katheer narrated that among the causes of the incitement against 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was the emergence of Ibn Saba', who went to Egypt and spread rumours among the people that he fabricated himself, by which many people in Egypt were deceived.[66]

The famous historians and scholars of both the earlier and later generations of this Ummah are agreed that Ibn Saba' appeared among the Muslims with ideas, plans and plots aimed at diverting the Muslims from their faith and from obeying their ruler, and spreading division and disputes among them. The thugs rallied around him, leading to the formation of the Saba'i group, which was one of the factors in the fitnah that ended with the murder of the caliph 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ﷺ). It seems that the Saba'i plots were very well organized. They were very skilled in directing their 'missionaries' and spreading their ideas, because they had the means of propaganda to influence the thugs and dregs of society. They were also active in forming branches in Basra, Kufah and Egypt, exploiting tribal sentiments and exploiting the weaknesses of the Bedouin, slaves and freed slaves, based on knowledge of what they wanted to hear.[67]

1.2. Different views among the Companions concerning the way to carry out retaliation against the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)

The difference that emerged between Amir al-Mu'mineen, on the one hand, and Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and 'Â'ishah on the other, and

after that between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, was not because these people rejected the caliphate and leadership of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), or that they denied that he was entitled to be the caliph and ruler in charge of the Muslims. That was something upon which they all agreed.

Ibn Ḥazm said: "Mu'âwiyah never denied 'Ali's virtue or his entitlement to the caliphate. But in his opinion, he believed that priority should be given to settling the issue of retaliation with regard to the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) over the issue of allegiance, and he thought that he himself was most entitled to seek retaliation for the blood of 'Uthmân."[68]

Ibn Taymiyah said: "Mu'âwiyah did not claim to be the caliph, and allegiance was not sworn to him as caliph when he fought 'Ali (ﷺ). He did not fight on the basis that he was a caliph or on the basis that he deserved that position. Mu'âwiyah's party affirmed that 'Ali (ﷺ) was the caliph, and Mu'âwiyah would confirm to anyone who asked him that 'Ali (ﷺ) was the caliph. Neither Mu'âwiyah nor his companions thought of initiating fighting against 'Ali and his companions, and they did not do that."[69] Ibn Taymiyah also said: "Each of the two groups confirmed that Mu'âwiyah was not as qualified as 'Ali with regard to being caliph, and that he could not be caliph when it was possible to appoint 'Ali to that position. 'Ali's superiority, seniority, knowledge, religious commitment, courage and all his virtues were obvious and well known to him, as was also the case with regard to his fellow caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them all)."[70]

The difference of opinion did not result from rejection of 'Ali's caliphate; the difference was only concerning the issue of bringing the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) to justice. Even then, their difference of opinion was not about this issue itself; rather it was about the way in which to bring them to justice. Amir al-Mu'mineen

'Ali (ﷺ) agreed with Mu'âwiyah in principle that the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) must be brought to justice, but his view was that the issue of bringing them to justice should be set aside until things settled down and unity was achieved.[71]

An-Nawawi said: "It should be noted that the reason for these battles was that the issues were not clear. Because they were so unclear, they held different views, and three groups emerged:

— a group whose view was that one party was in the right, and that those who differed with them were transgressors; they thought that they had to support this party and fight the transgressors, according to what they believed, and that it was not permissible for the one who reached that conclusion to withhold help and support from the leader who was in the right by fighting the transgressors, according to this belief;

— a group that held the opposite view; they thought that the other party was in the right, so it became obligatory for them to support that party and fight those who transgressed against them;

— a third party that was undecided about the issue and confused about it and did not reach any conclusion as to which party was more in the right; they kept away from both and believed that this staying away was what they were required to do with regard to this situation, because it was not permissible for them to help anyone in fighting other Muslims unless it was clear to them that they deserved to be fought, and that if they concluded that one of the two parties was closer to the right, it would not be permissible for them to withhold their support in fighting the transgressors."[72]

1.3. Az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and 'Â'ishah and their supporters set out for Basra to set things straight

Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr went to Makkah and met with 'Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all). Their arrival in Makkah came in the month of Rabee' al-Âkhir 36 AH, approximately four months after the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ).[73] In Makkah, negotiations began with 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) about going out on a campaign in pursuit of the murderers. There was heavy psychological pressure on those who felt that they had done nothing to stop the murder of the wronged caliph. They blamed themselves for letting him down, even though 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was the one who forbade anyone who wanted to defend him from doing so, because he wanted to offer himself as a sacrifice for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). They thought that there was no way to expiate this sin except by going out to seek vengeance. 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) said: "'Uthmân was slain wrongfully, and by Allah, I shall certainly seek vengeance for his blood."[74] Ṭalḥah said: "There were some shortcomings on my part with regard to 'Uthmân, and there is no way I can ever repent except to shed my own blood in vengeance for his blood."[75] And az-Zubayr said: "Let us inspire the people so that we may seek vengeance for his blood, lest it be forgotten, because forgetting it will lead to the weakening of the authority of Allah (ﷻ) among us forever. If we do not deter people from doing this again, there will be no leader except that people of that kind will kill him."[76]

This intense pressure on nerves and souls was sufficient to stir people up and motivate them to go out on the campaign. When they went, they realised that they were going out to face unknown turmoils, and each one of them left his home not expecting to return to it. The children bade farewell weeping, and the day when these people left Makkah for Basra was known as the day of wailing, a day that was unprecedented with regard to weeping for Islam.[77]

A number of factors in Makkah made them think seriously of striving to achieve their goal. One was the fact that the Umayyads had fled from Madinah and settled in Makkah. In addition, Abdullah ibn 'Âmir — the governor of Basra at the time of 'Uthmân — was in Makkah urging the people to go out and offering them material help. Ya'la ibn Umayyah, who had left Yemen to help the caliph 'Uthmân, had learned upon his arrival in Makkah that the caliph had been killed. He had with him considerable amounts of money, weapons and mounts, all of which he offered as help in pursuing the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). This was sufficient to encourage those who were looking for a way to pursue the murderers.

They had the means to gather a force to pursue the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), but where would they begin? A discussion took place among them as to which direction they should take. Some of them, led by 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), said that Madinah was where they should go. Another view was that they should head towards Syria, so that they could rally there against the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). After a lengthy discussion, they settled on Basra. There were too many of the rebels in Madinah, and they would not be able to confront them and fight them because they were fewer in number, and Syria was already under control because Mu'âwiyah was there. Hence going to Basra was most appropriate at that point, because it was the least strong of the cities; from there they hoped to be able to achieve their aims.[78]

Their plan and mission were clear before they set out, during their march and when they reached Basra: the intent was to seek vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), to set things straight, to inform the people of what the murderers had done and to enjoin good and forbid evil.[79] Their demand was to carry out one of the ḥadd punishments of Allah (ﷻ).[80] If the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) were not punished, then every leader would be vulnerable to murder by people of that nature.[81] As for the way in which they envisaged doing

that, they intended to enter Basra and then Kufah, seeking help from its people and others against the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Then they would call upon the people of other cities to join them, so that they could corner the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) who were present in the army of 'Ali and seize them with the minimum possible casualties.[82]

The campaign to Basra and the anger that stirred the Companions were not as straightforward as they may have appeared to people. Their purpose was not simply to avenge the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), as if he were just an ordinary person who had been killed, even though this also would involve a transgression of one of the sacred limits of Allah (ﷻ) that dictated getting angry and sending armies to seek revenge. This was much more serious because of the position and character of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), his status as caliph, and the way in which he was killed. It was the assassination of a Sharia figure, the caliph, whom the Muslims regarded as the deputy of the Lawgiver in his role of protecting the religion and ruling worldly affairs in accordance with Sharia.[83] Hence unlawful transgression against him constituted transgressing against the Lawgiver and weakening His authority, as well as disturbing law and order for the Muslims.[84]

'Â'ishah, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, along with the people who accompanied them, were striving to create a groundswell of Islamic public opinion to confront this Saba'i gang who had murdered 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and had since gained significant power. They meant to do this by making the Muslims aware of what these Saba'i thugs, who came from different regions and tribes, and the Bedouins and slaves who supported them, had done. Among the group of Companions that held the same view as 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), it became clear that the criminals and Saba'is had a presence in 'Ali's army. They believed that this was why it was difficult for 'Ali (ﷺ) to confront them, because he feared for the people of Madinah.

Hence they had to try to explain the situation to the Muslims and garner support for the party that was demanding implementation of the ḥadd punishments, so that this could be accomplished with the minimal loss of innocent lives. That was undoubtedly a goal which 'Ali (ﷺ) was striving to achieve, too; in fact, the reports that we have seen about the discussion among az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah and 'Ali refer to that. Their plan, and their intention of informing the people of what was happening and explaining matters to them, proves that they were fully aware of the situation. They recognised that the Saba'is had deceived the masses, and they understood how they had planted their ideas in a way which would continue to weaken the Ummah to such an extent that it would not know any peace.

Hence there was no alternative but to confront the Saba'i plan in the field of ideas, so as to cancel out their actions. This can clearly be seen in the sound reports[85] in which 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) speaks of the aims of this campaign. Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated that 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf, who was 'Ali's governor in Basra, sent word to 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) when she arrived in Basra, asking her why she had come. She said: "By Allah, a woman in my position should not go out on a campaign without having a clear reason and making it clear to her children (meaning the Muslims). The thugs of various cities and tribes have invaded the sanctuary of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and have committed a great deal of wrongdoing there, and they have offered refuge to the wrongdoers. Therefore they deserve the curse of Allah (ﷻ) and of His Messenger, as they killed the leader of the Muslims for no reason. They shed blood unlawfully, stole ḥarâm wealth and violated the sanctity of the sacred land and the sacred month. They transgressed against honour and killed troops. They settled in the place of people who did not want them to settle among them; they caused a great deal of harm but did not bring any benefit. I have come out among the Muslims to inform them of what these people have done, and of the pain and suffering of the people we have left behind,

and to tell them (the Muslims) what they should do in order to help set things straight." Then she recited the verse: ﴾There is no good in most of their secret talks save [in] him who orders *Sadaqah* [charity in Allah's Cause], or *Ma'roof* [Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained], or conciliation between mankind﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 114).* Thus people joined for the purpose of setting things straight for those whom Allah (ﷻ) and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) enjoined that, young and old, male and female. "This is what we are trying to achieve, to enjoin you to do what is right and forbid you from doing evil, and we urge you to change it."[86]

Ibn Hibbân narrated that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) wrote to Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, 'Ali's governor in Kufah, saying: "You know about the murder of 'Uthmân, and I have come out to set things right among the people. Tell the people in your city to stay in their houses so that we can achieve what they like of setting the Muslims' affairs straight."[87] 'Ali sent al-Qa'qâ' ibn 'Amr to 'Â'ishah and the people with her to ask them why she had come. Al-Qa'qâ' entered upon her, greeted her with salâm and said: "O my mother, what caused you to leave your home and come to this city?" She said: "O my son, it is to set the people's affairs straight."[88]

After the end of the battle on the day of the Camel, 'Ali came to 'Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with them both) and said to her: "May Allah forgive you." She said: "And you too. I only wanted to set things straight."[89] Thus we learn that she only went out on this campaign to set things straight among the people, and this is the refutation of those among the Râfiḍi Shia who slandered 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) and said that she left her house after Allah (ﷻ) had commanded her to stay in it, in the verse ﴾And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 33).* The scholarly consensus is that travelling for the purpose of doing a righteous deed does not contradict the idea of staying in one's

house and not going out. This is what 'Â'ishah, the Mother of the Believers (ﷺ), thought when she went out to set things straight among the Muslims, accompanied by her maḥram and the son of her sister, Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr.[90]

Ibn Taymiyah said, refuting the Râfiḍis concerning this issue: "She (ﷺ) did not display herself as in the times of ignorance. The command to stay in their houses does not mean that women should never go out for some purpose that is enjoined, such as going out for hajj and 'umrah, or going out with her husband when he travels. This verse was revealed during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took his wives with him on his journeys after that, as he took 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) and others with him during his farewell pilgrimage. He sent 'Â'ishah with her brother 'Abdur-Raḥmân, who seated her behind him on his mount, and he took her to start her 'umrah from at-Tan'eem. The farewell pilgrimage took place less than three months before the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), after this verse was revealed. Hence the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) performed hajj after he died as they had done with him, during the caliphate of 'Umar (ﷺ) and others, and 'Umar would appoint 'Uthmân or 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf in charge of their caravan. If the journey is for a legitimate purpose, then it is permissible. 'Â'ishah believed that this journey was in the best interests of the Muslims, and that was her opinion."[91]

Ibn al-'Arabi said: "As for her going out to the Battle of the Camel, she did not set out to fight, but the people pinned their hopes on her and complained to her about how bad the turmoil and confusion had become. They hoped by her blessing to set things straight and that the people would show respect for her and comply when she took a stance among them. She also thought that herself, so she set out in compliance with the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾There is no good in most of their secret talks save [in] him who orders *Sadaqah*

[charity in Allah's Cause], or *Ma'roof* [Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained], or conciliation between mankind﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 114)*. The command to reconcile between people and set things straight is addressed to all people, male or female, free or slave."[92]

The following are a number of important issues having to do with her going out:

1.3.1. Was 'Â'ishah forced to go out?

Al-Ya'qoobi claimed that az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm forced 'Â'ishah to go out.[93] This was the view of the author of *al-Amânah was-Siyâsah*[94] and Ibn Abil-Ḥadeed;[95] it was also the opinion of ad-Daynoori.[96] The report narrated by adh-Dhahabi indicated that the one who forced her was Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr,[97] the son of her sister Asma'. This report was relied on and quoted by many researchers, such as Muhammad Sayyid al-Wakeel,[98] who claimed that az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah encouraged 'Â'ishah to go out; this claim was also made by Zâhiyah Qadoorah[99] and others, but it is not correct. 'Â'ishah began to demand vengeance for the slaying of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) from the moment she learned of his murder, long before az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah and other senior Companions reached Makkah.

It is narrated that when she set off to return to Makkah, Abdullah ibn 'Âmir al-Ḥaḍrami came to her and said: "Why are you coming back, O Mother of the Believers?" She said: "I am coming back because 'Uthmân has been killed unlawfully, and the affairs of the Muslims cannot be sound if these thugs continue to cause trouble. Seek vengeance for the blood of 'Uthmân and thus support Islam." Abdullah was the first one to respond.[100] Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr had not yet left Madinah; they did not leave until four months after the murder of 'Uthmân.[101]

1.3.2. Was she in control of those who were with her?

Among those who went out on the campaign with her (ﵵ) were a number of the Companions.[102] 'Â'ishah was not a woman who was in control and able to make people do what she wanted, as Brockelmann claims.[103] Aṭ-Ṭabari's reports confirm that the rest of the Mothers of the Believers supported her, as did those who were with her in the effort to put things straight; indeed, a considerable number of the people of Basra supported her, too.[104] These supporters, whose numbers were not small, were not insignificant people; Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr described them as the best and most wise of the people of Basra,[105] and 'Â'ishah described them as the righteous.[106] The fact that this number of righteous people supported her cause could only be the result of strong belief in the cause, confidence that something could be achieved by this campaign, and certainty that its purpose was sound. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (﵁) knew that, and he refuted the claim made by some people that those who went out with 'Â'ishah were a group of fools, thugs and hooligans.[107] After the Battle of the Camel, Amir al-Mu'mineen stood among those of 'Â'ishah's party who had been slain, praying for mercy for them and recounting their virtues.[108] We shall see below that it was not an unruly campaign in which 'Â'ishah controlled and directed immature people; rather it was a campaign in which some of the senior Companions took part.[109]

1.3.3. Attitude of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) towards those who sought vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân

The wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) had gone for hajj that year to get away from the turmoil. After news reached the people in Makkah that 'Uthmân (﵁) had been murdered, they stayed on in Makkah. They

had left the holy city, but they went and back and followed news of the situation, waiting to see what people would do. When allegiance was sworn to 'Ali (ﷺ), a number of the Companions left Madinah, not wanting to stay there because of the presence of troublemakers from other regions. Many of the Companions and the Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them all) gathered in Makkah.[110] The other Mothers of the Believers agreed with 'Â'ishah about going to Madinah to seek justice. When 'Â'ishah, and the Companions who were with her, decided to go to Basra instead, the others changed their minds and said: "We will not go anywhere except Madinah."[111] So the idea of seeking vengeance for 'Uthmân was not something on which the Mothers of the Believers differed, but they disagreed when the plan changed from Madinah to Basra. The Mother of the Believers Ḥafṣah bint 'Umar (ﷺ) agreed with 'Â'ishah about going to Basra, but her brother Abdullah insisted that she should not go; this was not based on her personal conviction.[112] She sent her apologies to 'Â'ishah, saying: "Abdullah has prevented me from going on the campaign."[113]

The commonly known reports indicate that the Mother of the Believers Umm Salamah (ﷺ) did not share the view of 'Â'ishah with regard to going out on campaign to Basra; rather she shared 'Ali's view.[114] The sound reports indicate that she sent her son 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah to 'Ali with the message: "By Allah, he is dearer to me than my own self; he will go out with you to fight alongside you." He went out with 'Ali (ﷺ) and remained with him.[115] This is a report which, upon examination, does not mean that by sending her son she had a different opinion tfrom the other Mothers of the Believers with regard to setting things straight among the Muslims.

'Â'ishah herself, along with those who were with her, did not think that this campaign meant that they were going against 'Ali

(ﷺ) or rebelling against his caliphate, as we have seen and as events will confirm to us. We also find nothing in the sound reports to indicate that Umm Salamah went against the consensus of the Mothers of the Believers with regard to the importance of setting things straight.[116] The Mothers of the Believers knew that this campaign to set things straight among the Muslims came under the category of a communal obligation, and the guideline concerning such obligations is that it is not expected of all Muslims to carry out that duty; it is expected only of those who are qualified to carry it out. 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) was fully qualified to carry out that duty because of her status, age, knowledge and ability. She (ﷺ) was the most knowledgeable of the Mothers of the Believers regarding Islam and Sharia, according to Muslim consensus.[117] Moreover, she took a keen interest in current events and was highly educated and cultured. Her education had begun when she was growing up in the house of Abu Bakr (ﷺ), who had a vast knowledge of Arabic history and lineages; then she had lived in the house of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), from which had emerged the principles on which the Muslim state was based. Furthermore, she was the daughter of the first caliph of the Muslims.

The scholars confirmed this high status of 'Â'ishah. 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr said: "I was acquainted with 'Â'ishah, and I have never seen anyone at all who was more knowledgeable of any verse that was revealed, any obligatory duty, any sunnah; anyone who was more well-versed in poetry or narrated more poetry; anyone who was more knowledgeable of Arabic history and lineage and so forth; or anyone who had more knowledge of judiciary matters or medicine than her."[118] Ash-Sha'bi used to mention her and express his admiration for her understanding and knowledge, then he would say: "No wonder, when she learned from the Prophet (ﷺ)!" 'Ata' used to say: " 'Â'ishah was the most knowledgeable of people and the most

wise."[119] Al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays, the chief of Banu Tameem and one of the most eloquent of the Arabs, used to say: "I heard the speeches of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali and the caliphs who came after them, and I never heard words from the mouth of any person that were more powerful and more beautiful than those of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ)." Mu'âwiyah used to say something similar.[120] The Mothers of the Believers bade farewell to 'Â'ishah when she left for Basra, and this is indicative of their support and encouragement for her in what she was doing.[121]

1.3.4. 'Â'ishah's passing by the oasis of al-Ḥaw'ab[122]

It is proven with sound chains of narration that 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) passed by the oasis of al-Ḥaw'ab. It was narrated from Yahya ibn Sa'eed al-Qaṭṭân, from Ismâ'eel ibn Abi Khâlid, from Qays ibn Ḥâzim that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to his wives: "How will one of you be when the dogs of al-Ḥaw'ab bark at her?"[123] It was also narrated via Shu'bah from Ismâ'eel that when 'Â'ishah came to al-Ḥaw'ab, she heard the barking of dogs, and she said: "I think I should go back, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Which one of you will the dogs of al-Ḥaw'ab bark at?'" Az-Zubayr said to her: "Are you going back? Perhaps Allah (ﷻ) will put people's affairs straight by means of you."[124] This version was narrated by Ya'la ibn 'Ubayd from Ismâ'eel, and was recorded by al-Ḥâkim.[125] Al-Albâni said: "Its chain of narration is very sound." He also said: "It was classed as such by senior imams of hadith such as Ibn Ḥibbân, adh-Dhahabi, Ibn Katheer and Ibn Ḥajar."[126]

These are sound reports in which there is nothing misleading or false, because the Companions would not stoop to that level, contrary to what is claimed in false reports,[127] as we shall see below. The one who studies these reports, which have been classified as sound by the scholars, will not find anything in them to suggest that

'Â'ishah (ﷺ) should or should not have done the things that she did. Rather what may be understood from them is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was wondering which one of his wives would pass by the oasis of al-Ḥaw'ab. The reports that contain the word 'beware', indicating that the Prophet (ﷺ) warned against going there, were not classified as sound by the scholars; in fact, they were classified as weak. One example is the report which says, "Beware lest you be there, O Ḥumayra."[128]

Hence the correct view, which we follow, is that the fact that 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) passed by the water of al-Ḥaw'ab did not have the negative effect which was suggested by the fabricated reports. It did not have any far-reaching effect on 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) herself to the point that she started thinking seriously of turning back and giving up the cause for which she had set out, namely to set matters straight among the Muslims and correct their mistakes. The matter did not go beyond a passing thought on her part, in which the possibility of turning back merely crossed her mind. This is how she expressed it when she said: "I thought about going back, but it was only an idea that did not last for long." Then her mission became clear again, after az-Zubayr reminded her of what Allah (ﷻ) might bring about at her hands in terms of setting things straight among the Muslims.[129]

The issue of the oasis of al-Ḥaw'ab, and the hadiths in which al-Ḥaw'ab is mentioned, were and still are fertile ground for the Shia and others, which they use to criticise the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﷺ). They criticised her for going out and campaigning to seek vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), and they even went so far as to deny that her decision was based on valid ijtihâd on her part; they claimed that she went against the instructions of the Messenger (ﷺ) not to go to the oasis of al-Ḥaw'ab. The historical sources mentioned this story, and it is mentioned by aṭ-Ṭabari in a lengthy report that was narrated by Ismâ'eel ibn Moosa al-Fazâri, of

whom Ibn 'Adiyy said: "They (the scholars) criticised him for being an extremist and a Shia."[130] Al-Fazâri narrated this report from 'Ali ibn 'Âbis al-Azraq, who is weak according to Ibn Ḥajar and an-Nasâ'i.[131] He also narrated this report from al-Khaṭṭâb al-Hajri, who is unknown.[132] This unknown al-Hajri narrated from another unknown narrator, whose name was Ṣafwân ibn Qubay'ah al-Aḥmasi.[133] Finally, an even more unknown character is al-'Azni, the alleged owner of the camel. He was not the owner of the camel; rather its owner was Ya'la ibn Umayyah.[134]

In the text of this report, the reader may detect a clear whiff of Shia and Râfiḍi influence at the end of the report, where it is claimed that 'Ali (ﷺ) thought himself more entitled to the caliphate than Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them all). On the contrary, the reports that are proven to be sound indicate something completely different.[135] Based on the above, it becomes clear to us that this report is not sound.[136] There are other reports concerning this matter, all of which are false in both chain of narration and text. The message and aim of these reports is to cast aspersions on the senior Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and to prove that the goal of this campaign was to achieve worldly, personal gains such as wealth, leadership and so on; that the ends justified the means; and that in trying to achieve that, they would not refrain from creating war and turmoil among the Muslims.

These reports focus on two great Companions, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr.[137] The fabricators of these reports also wanted to confirm that these two Companions and the members of the army who were with them dared to violate the sacred limits of Allah (ﷻ). The reports allege that Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr swore in the strongest terms to the Mother of the Believers that this was not the water of al-Ḥaw'ab; furthermore, they brought seventy people — and according to another report, fifty people — to testify that what they said was true.

This action, according to the Râfiḍi Shia al-Mas'oodi, was the first false witness given in Islam.[138] These reports tried to show that Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and 'Â'ishah were not in harmony and were not united on one goal. They tried to show that 'Â'ishah (ﵲ) sided with Ṭalḥah (ﷺ) and that deep down in her heart, she was hoping that he would become caliph because he was from the tribe of Taym just like her. These reports also suggest that there was intense competition and rivalry between Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, and that they were both eager to become the leader. One cannot ignore the fact that these reports are not free of severe weakness. In some of them, the chain of narration is interrupted, and in some, there are narrators about whom nothing is known; in some cases both serious faults are present.[139] Many writers and historians were influenced by these reports, relied on them and played a part in propagating them, but they have no basis. These writers include al-'Aqqâd in *'Abqariyat 'Ali*, Taha Hussein in *'Ali wa Banuhu*[140] and other contemporary writers.

1.3.5. Their actions in Basra

When Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, 'Â'ishah and the people with them arrived in Basra, they stopped beside al-Khuraybah.[141] From there, they sent word to the prominent figures and nobles of the tribes, seeking their help against the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Many of the Muslims in Basra and elsewhere wanted to bring the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) to justice, but some of them thought that this was the job of the caliph alone, and that going out on campaign for this purpose without his instructions was wrong. Many of the people of Basra, regardless of their different tribal backgrounds, joined them because these were Companions whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had testified were guaranteed paradise; they were members of the consultative committee; they were accompanied by the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﵲ), the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the

most knowledgeable of all women; their quest was undoubtedly legitimate; and no Companion denounced it.

Az-Zubayr sent a message to al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays al-Sa'di at-Tameemi, asking for his support in seeking vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Al-Aḥnaf was one of the leaders of Tameem, a man whose word carried weight. He said, describing the seriousness of the situation: "There came to me the most serious decision I was ever faced with, and I said: 'If I let these people down when they have the Mother of the Believers and the two disciples of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with them, it will be something very serious indeed.'"[142] However, he decided to keep out of it, and he took with him six thousand men who obeyed him, but many others disobeyed him with regard to this matter and joined Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and the Mother of the Believers.[143] Az-Zuhri stated that most of the people of Basra followed them.[144] Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, 'Â'ishah and their followers were joined by new supporters of the cause for which they had come out. Ibn Ḥunayf tried to calm things down and sort things out as much as he could, but the matter was beyond his control, so much so that one of them said concerning Basra: "Some of the people of Syria have descended among us."[145] Even Mu'âwiyah, later on, tried to take over Basra with the help of its people.[146]

Some unreliable sources say that 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf allowed Ḥukaym ibn Jablah to fight, but this is not proven, and the sound sources do not confirm that.[147]

1.3.6. The slaying of Ḥukaym ibn Jablah and the thugs who were with him

After 'Â'ishah had addressed the people of Basra, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah came and started fighting. The companions of 'Â'ishah, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr brandished their spears at them, but they did not engage in combat. They were hoping that the other side would

stop, but Ḥukaym and his gang continued fighting and did not stop. Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr refrained from fighting except to defend themselves, while Ḥukaym was urging his horse on and charging at them.[148] Despite that, 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) was very keen to avoid all-out fighting, so she ordered her companions to move to the right in order to avoid the fighters. They remained like that until night fell.[149]

The next morning, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah, making noise and with his spear in his hand, made his way to where 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) and her companions were. Whenever he passed a man or woman who criticised him for slandering 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), he killed him or her.[150] At that point, the people of the tribe of 'Abdul-Qays became angry and said to Ḥukaym: "You did what you did yesterday, and you have repeated it today. By Allah (ﷻ), we will not let you off until we bring you to justice."

Then they went back and left him, and Ḥukaym ibn Jablah continued on his way with those who had taken part in the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), accompanied by the thugs of different tribal backgrounds. They realised that they could no longer stay in Basra, so they all rallied behind him and engaged the army of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), and fierce fighting took place.[151] The caller of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) continued calling out and urging them to stop fighting, but they insisted.[152] 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) continued to say: "Do not fight anyone but those who are fighting you." Ḥukaym did not pay any attention to the caller; he continued to instigate the fighting. At this point, the nature of these people who were fighting became clear to az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah; they realised that they would not refrain from committing any crime, and that their aim was to provoke the fighting.

They said: "Praise be to Allah, who has brought together for us the people of Basra who took part in the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) so that we may wreak revenge on them. O Allah, do not leave any of them alive. Help us to bring them to justice today, and cause them all

to die." They strove hard in fighting and called out: "Whoever was not one of the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), let him stop fighting us, for we are only seeking the killers of 'Uthmân, and we will not initiate fighting with anyone else." They fought fiercely,[153] and none of the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) among the people of Basra escaped, except for one. The caller of az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah called out: "If you know any one from your tribes who took part in murdering 'Uthmân (ﷺ) in Madinah, then bring him to us."[154]

A group of these ignorant thugs — as 'Â'ishah said — had come to her house at dawn to kill her. They got as far as the door of her room with the help of a guide, but Allah (ﷻ) protected her by means of a group of Muslims who had surrounded her house. The Muslims prevailed over them, then they paraded them about and executed them.[155]

Az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and those who were with them managed to gain control of Basra, but they needed food and supplies because several weeks had gone by, and no one had offered them hospitality. The army of az-Zubayr went to the governor's palace and then to the public treasury to get provisions for the army; 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf was released and went to join 'Ali (ﷺ).[156] Thus Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and the Mother of the Believers gained control of Basra and killed a large number of those who had taken part in the attack on Madinah, some seventy men, including the most prominent leader of the rebels of Basra, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah, who had been very keen to fight and start the war.[157]

1.3.7. The letters of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) to other regions

'Â'ishah (ﷺ) was keen to explain what had really happened during the fight with the people of Basra, so she wrote to the people of Syria, Kufah and al-Yamâmah, and the people of Madinah also, telling them what they had done and how things had ended up.

Among the things that she wrote to the people of Syria was: "We only set out to put an end to the turmoil and to establish the rule of the Book of Allah (ﷻ). Once we achieve that, our campaign will be over. The best of the people of Basra and their prominent figures pledged their support for us, and their evil ones and thugs opposed us and confronted us with weapons. Among the things they said was: 'We will take the Mother of the Believers as a hostage, as she is the one who is enjoining them and urging them to adhere to the truth.' The Muslims gave them opportunity (to reconsider) time after time, then when there was no excuse left for them, the murderers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) were fought. None of them escaped except for Ḥurqooṣ ibn Zuhayr, and Allah (ﷻ) will bring him to justice. We urge you by Allah (ﷻ) that you should carry out the same mission as us, so that we and you may meet Allah (ﷻ) having done what is expected of us."[158]

1.3.8. Difference of opinion between 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf and the army of 'Â'ishah, az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah

At-Ṭabari narrated from Abu Makhnaf from Yoosuf ibn Yazeed that Sahl ibn Sa'd said: "When they caught 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf, they sent Abân ibn 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân to 'Â'ishah to consult her as to what should be done with him, and she said: 'Kill him.' A woman said to her: 'We adjure you by Allah, O Mother of the Believers, concerning 'Uthmân (ibn Ḥunayf) and the fact that he was a Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).' She said: 'Bring Abân back.' So they brought him back, and she said: 'Detain him, and do not kill him.' He said: 'If I had known that you were calling me back for this reason, I would not have come back.' Majâshi' ibn Mas'ood said to them: 'Beat him and pluck out the hair of his beard.' So they gave him forty lashes and plucked out the hair of his beard

and his head, and his eyebrows and eyelashes, and they detained him."[159] But the chain of narration of this report includes Abu Makhnaf, who is an extremist, hate-filled, Râfiḍi Shia. This report was not proven by any sound chain of narration that can be relied on. The noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) are far above doing such an abhorrent action.

What may be understood from the report of Sayf is that the thugs were the ones who did that, and that Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr regarded it as abhorrent and unacceptable. They sent news of that to 'Â'ishah (ﵒ), who said: "Release him, and let him go wherever he wants."[160] This report contradicts the details mentioned by Abu Makhnaf because it does not mention the command to kill him or detain him, or the command to pluck out his facial hair. This report, which is the sound one, was favoured by an-Nuwayri and Ibn Katheer.[161] Adh-Dhahabi stated that Majâshi' ibn Mas'ood was killed before he entered the house of 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf.[162] Even if we assume that Majâshi' ibn Mas'ood was not killed, he was not in a position of leadership to issue such instructions.[163]

1.4. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib sets out for Kufah

The Companions in Madinah did not approve of 'Ali's leaving Madinah. That became clear when 'Ali (ﷺ) decided to march to Syria, to visit its people and see what Mu'âwiyah was thinking and doing.[164] He thought that at that stage, Madinah no longer possessed the advantages that other cities possessed, and he said: "Manpower and wealth are in Iraq."[165] When Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣâri (ﷺ) found out about this idea, he said to the caliph: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, stay in this land, because it is the shield that can give protection, the place to which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) migrated. In it is his grave and his minbar, and it is the heart of Islam. If the Arabs show obedience

to you, you will be fine like the caliphs who came before you; if some people cause trouble to you, then send their enemies against them. If you are forced to leave, then you may leave, after exhausting all possible means of staying." The caliph followed the advice of Abu Ayyoob and decided to stay in Madinah and send governors to the provinces.[166]

A number of political developments then took place that forced the caliph to leave Madinah, and he decided to head for Kufah so that he could be close to the people of Syria.[167] While he was preparing to leave, news reached him that 'Â'ishah, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr had set out for Basra.[168] He asked the people of Madinah to mobilise and support him, but he encountered reluctance on the part of some of the people of Madinah because of the presence of the troublemakers in 'Ali's army and the way in which they were dealt with. Many of the people of Madinah thought that the turmoil was still going on, and that they should wait until things became clearer. They said: "No, by Allah (ﷻ), we do not know what to do. This matter is not clear to us, so we are going to stay where we are until the matter becomes clear to us." Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) set out with his army for the purpose of confronting the people of Syria, and some of the people of Kufah and Basra went out with him, a group of seven hundred lightly armed men.[169]

There is a great deal of evidence that many of the people of Madinah were reluctant to respond to 'Ali's call to go out on a campaign, such as the speeches of the caliph in which he complained about this reluctance.[170] Many of the Companions withdrew after the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), as is apparent. Some of the men who had been present at Badr stayed in their houses after the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and never left until they went to their graves.[171] Abu Ḥumayd as-Sâ'idi al-Anṣâri, who had been present at Badr, expressed his sorrow at the murder of the caliph 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and

said: "O Allah, I promise You that I will not smile until I meet You."[172] They thought that leaving Madinah at that time would lead to getting embroiled in the turmoil, the bad consequences of which, they feared,[173] would cancel out what they had achieved in the past of righteous deeds and jihad with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).[174]

What is mentioned above does not mean that none of the Companions joined the caliph's campaign; there were some who joined him, but they were few. Ash-Sha'bi said: "None of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were present at the Battle of the Camel except for 'Ali, 'Ammâr, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr; if they prove that there was a fifth, then I am a liar."[175] According to another report: "Whoever tells you that more than four of those who were present at Badr were present at the Battle of the Camel, do not believe him. 'Ali and 'Ammâr were on one side, and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr were on the other."[176] According to another report: "No one joined 'Ali when he marched to Basra apart from six of the people of Badr; there was no seventh."[177]

This is what is meant by the report mentioned above, which referred only to those Companions who had been at Badr. Whatever the case, those of the Anṣâr who took part in the turmoil were few. Ibn Sireen and ash-Sha'bi said: "When the turmoil occurred in Madinah, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were more than ten thousand, but those who got involved were no more than twenty men. The battle between 'Ali and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr and the battle of Ṣiffeen were called fitnah."[178]

From the above, it is clear that the number of Companions who went out with the caliph 'Ali to Basra were very few, and we cannot be certain that they took part in the Battle of the Camel; even though this battle was so fierce and so many events took place during it, the sources do not mention the Companions who took part in it or say that any of them were martyred or wounded.[179] One of the reports

says: “Some seven hundred lightly armed men of Kufah and Basra went out with him.”[180] These reports seem to be more in line with how things were developing at that time and more in harmony with the course of events and with the attitude of the people of Madinah, which varied between keeping away completely and reluctance to take part in any events.[181]

1.4.1. Advice of Abdullah ibn Salâm to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ)

Abdullah ibn Salâm, the companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), tried to make Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) change his mind and not go out. He came to him when he had made preparations to march and expressed his fear for him. He told him not to go to Iraq, saying: “I am afraid that you may be struck by the sword.” He also told him that if he left the minbar of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he would never see it again. ‘Ali (ﷺ) knew these things from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he said: “By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) told me about that.” The people of Basra and Kufah who were with ‘Ali (ﷺ) had reached such a level of audacity that they said to him, “Let us kill him.” Killing Muslims who stood in their way or who could pose a danger to their lives with their words and deeds had become something very easy, and they did not see anything wrong with it. But ‘Ali told them not to do that, saying: “Abdullah ibn Salâm is a righteous man.”[182] What they said, and their aggressive attitude, was indicative of their lack of piety and their lack of respect towards the noble Companions, which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had enjoined upon the people who came after him.

1.4.2. Advice of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali to his father

Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) left Madinah, and when he reached ar-Rabdhah,[183] he and those who were with him camped

there. A number of Muslims, approximately two hundred, came to him.[184] In ar-Rabdhah, his son al-Ḥasan came to him, weeping and not hiding his sorrow and dismay at what had befallen the Muslims of division and dissent. Al-Ḥasan said: "I told you, but you did not listen to me, and next you will be killed when you are alone with no one to support you." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "You are still nagging like a little girl.[185] What is it that you told me to do and I did not listen to you?" He said: "I told you on the day that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was besieged to leave Madinah, so that if he was killed, you would not be there. Then I told you on the day that he was killed not to accept the oath of allegiance until the delegations from different regions and Arab tribes had each sworn their allegiance. Then I told you, when these two men did what they did, to stay at home until things settled down, so if any evildoing took place, it would be at the hands of people other than you, but you did not listen to me in any of that." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "O my son, as for you telling me to leave Madinah when 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was surrounded, by Allah, we were surrounded as he was surrounded. As for your telling me not to accept the oath of allegiance until the allegiance of the regions came, this matter was something to be decided by the people of Madinah, and we did not want this decision to be made by others. As for what you said when Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr set out, that was demeaning to the people of Islam. By Allah, I have continued to be saddened and aggrieved since I was appointed, feeling helpless and not able to achieve anything I should achieve. As for your saying that I should stay home, what about my duties? Who do you want me to be? Do you want me to be like the hyena that is surrounded, that is helpless and just yelping? If I do not pay attention to my duties concerning this issue, who will take care of that? Stop worrying about it, O my son."[186]

'Ali's attitude concerning this matter was clear, and no one could deter him from what he had decided to do. He (ﷺ) sent word

from ar-Rabdhah, urging the people of Kufah to mobilise and calling upon them to support him. The two envoys were Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq and Muhammad ibn Ja'far, but they did not succeed in their mission because Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, 'Ali's governor in Kufah, discouraged the people and told them not to go out and fight in the turmoil. He told them what he had heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), warning against taking part in fitnah.[187] After that, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent Hâshim ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi Waqqâṣ, but he also failed in his mission because of the influence of Abu Moosa on the people.[188]

1.4.3. Request of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) from the oasis of Dhu Qâr for support from the people of Kufah[189]

'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and his army moved towards Dhu Qâr and camped there, eight days after leaving Madinah, with approximately nine hundred men.[190] At that time, he sent Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs to Kufah, but they did not respond to him. Next he sent 'Ammar ibn Yâsir and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, and he dismissed Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, replacing him with Qardhah ibn Ka'b.[191] Al-Qa'qâ' played a major role in convincing the people of Kufah to join 'Ali. He addressed them and said: "I am an adviser to you, and I care sincerely about you. I want you to follow true guidance, and I shall tell you something that is true... There should be no alternative but to have a leadership to organise the people's affairs, deter wrongdoers and support those who are wronged. This is 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) who has been appointed to a position of leadership, and his message to the people is fair and just. He is only calling people to that which is best and to set affairs straight, so join him and be in the forefront of support."[192]

Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali had a clear effect on the people. He stood up and addressed them, saying: "O people, respond to the call of your leader. Join your brothers, because no doubt there will be many

people who will support him in this matter. By Allah, it is better that this matter of leadership be taken care of by people of reason and wisdom, both in the short- and long-term. Respond to our call, and help us with regard to this crisis that we and you are going through."[193]

Many of the people of Kufah responded, and between six and seven thousand went out with 'Ammâr and al-Ḥasan. They were joined by two thousand men from Basra, from the tribe of 'Abdul-Qays. Then other tribes came to him until his army, when the battle began, was approximately twelve thousand strong.[194] When the people of Kufah met Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali at Dhu Qâr, he said to them: "O people of Kufah, you confronted the Persians and their kings, you destroyed their armies and inherited what they left behind, and you grew stronger against your enemies. I am calling you to join us in order to deal with our brothers in Basra. If they turn back, that is what we want, but if they persist, we will try to deal with them on the basis of kindness, and we will avoid confrontation unless they wrong us first. We will never leave anything that could lead to putting things straight and achieving something good, but we will prefer it over that which could lead to evil, if Allah wills, and there is no strength except with Allah (ﷻ)."[195]

1.4.4. Difference of opinion should not affect the love between people

This applies to the situation of the Companions during this turmoil. Even though they had differences of opinion, none of them developed any resentment against his brother. Let us read this story about an incident that took place in Kufah:

Bukhari narrated that Abu Wâ'il said: "Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, Abu Mas'ood and 'Uqbah ibn 'Amr al-Anṣâri entered upon 'Ammâr when 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent him to the people of Kufah to urge them to join

him. They said: 'We have never seen anything from you that we dislike since you became Muslim like your hastening to take sides in this matter.' 'Ammâr said: 'And I have never seen anything from you that I dislike since you became Muslim like your reluctance in this matter (supporting 'Ali).'" According to another report: Abu Mas'ood, who was well off, said: "O slave, bring me two suits and give one to Abu Moosa and one to 'Ammâr." He said: "Wear it when you go to the Friday prayer."[196]

Here we see Abu Mas'ood and 'Ammâr, each thinking that the other is wrong. Despite that, Abu Mas'ood gave 'Ammâr a suit to wear for the Friday prayer because he was wearing travel clothes and battle dress, and Abu Mas'ood did not want him to have to attend the Friday prayer wearing those clothes. This conduct is indicative of deep friendship, even though they each regarded the other's attitude towards the turmoil as wrong. 'Ammâr thought that Abu Moosa and Abu Mas'ood's reluctance to support 'Ali was wrong, and Abu Moosa and Abu Mas'ood thought that 'Ammâr's haste to support Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was wrong. Each of them had an argument of which he was convinced. Those who were reluctant to support the caliph thought that it was right to refrain from taking part in fighting in the event of fitnah, adhering to those hadiths concerning this, which warned against taking up arms against fellow Muslims. 'Ammâr had the same point of view as 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to fighting those who transgress the limits or commit outrages, and he adhered to the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾Then fight you [all] against the one that rebels﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 9)*. He interpreted the warning against fighting as applying to those who were transgressing against their brothers. Neither party wanted to kill the other, and both sides would try to find any reason to prevent fighting before it took place. When fighting did occur, it occurred even though both parties were reluctant to fight.[197]

1.4.5. Questions on the road

1.4.5.a. The questions asked by Abu Rifâ'ah ibn Râfi' ibn Mâlik al-'Ajlân al-Anṣâri when 'Ali wanted to leave ar-Rabdhah

Abu Rifâ'ah said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, what do you want? Where are you taking us?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "What we want is to set things straight; if they accept that from us and respond, all well and good." Abu Rifâ'ah said: "What if they do not respond?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "We will leave them with the reason they have in their mind (their own justification for their conduct) and acknowledge their right to differ, and we will be patient." Abu Rifâ'ah said: "What if they are not content with that?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "We will leave them alone as long as they leave us alone." Abu Rifâ'ah said: "What if they do not leave us alone?" 'Ali said: "We will defend ourselves against them." Abu Rifâ'ah said: "Then yes (I will join you)."

He listened to that series of questions and answers, and his mind was put at rest, so he said: "I shall impress you with my deeds as you have pleased me with your words."[198]

1.4.5.b. The people of Kufah, including al-A'war ibn Banân al-Manqari, asked questions of 'Ali (ﷺ)

When the people of Kufah came to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) in Dhu Qâr, some of them asked him the reason why he had come; among those who asked these questions was al-A'war ibn Banân al-Manqari. 'Ali (ﷺ) said to him: "I am coming to put things in order and extinguish the fire of enmity, in the hope that Allah (ﷻ) will bring this Ummah together by means of us and prevent fighting. If they respond to me, all well and good." Al-A'war said: "What if they do not respond to us?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "We will leave them alone as long as they leave us alone." Al-A'war said: "What if they do not leave us alone?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "We will defend ourselves

against them." Al-A'war said: "Do they have the same rights and duties as us?" He said: "Yes."[199]

1.4.5.c. Abu Salâmah ad-Da'lâni, one of those who asked questions of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه)

Abu Salâmah said: "Do you think these people have valid grounds for their demand of vengeance for 'Uthmân, if they are seeking Allah thereby?" 'Ali said: "Yes." Abu Salâmah said: "Is there any valid reason for you to delay that (the seeking vengeance)?" 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "Yes. If there is something that cannot be done, then the ruling concerning it should be based on precautions and what is in the people's best interests." Abu Salâmah said: "What is our situation and theirs if we end up fighting tomorrow?" 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "I hope that no one who is sincere towards Allah among us or them will be killed except that Allah will admit him to paradise."[200]

1.4.5.d. Mâlik ibn Ḥabeeb asked questions of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه)

Mâlik said: "What will you do if you meet these people (in battle)?" 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "It has become clear to us and to them that what is best is to refrain from that. If they give us allegiance, all well and good, but if they and we insist on fighting, then there is nothing we can do about it." Mâlik said: "If we start fighting, what is the situation of those among us who are slain?" 'Ali said: "Whoever is sincere towards Allah will benefit from that, and it may be his salvation."[201]

The aim of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was to set things straight and put an end to the fitnah. Fighting was not something that he was considering; if it happened, it would be because he could not help it. With regard to whoever was killed on either side, his ultimate fate would depend on his intention, regardless of whether he fought

on 'Ali's side or against him. Thus Amir al-Mu'mineen confirmed that the Muslims who went out for this purpose, after the martyrdom of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), were seeking to set things straight and put an end to turmoil, and their decision was based on sincerity. Their reward would be commensurate with the sincerity of their intentions and the purity of their hearts.[202]

1.5. Attempts at reconciliation

Before 'Ali (ﷺ) moved towards Basra with his army, he stayed in Dhu Qâr for a few days. He tried, with all the powers and means at his disposal, to put an end to this division and turmoil by peaceful means and to spare the Muslims the evils of fighting and armed confrontation. The same is also true of Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr. A number of the Companions and senior Tâbi'oon who had refrained from getting involved also took part in the attempts to bring about reconciliation, including:

1.5.1. 'Imrân ibn Huṣayn (ﷺ)

He sent word to the people discouraging both parties (from engaging in fighting). Then he sent word to Banu 'Adiyy, a large group of whom had joined az-Zubayr. His envoy came and said to them in their mosque: "I have been sent to you by 'Imrân ibn Huṣayn, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to advise you; he swears by Allah, besides Whom there is no other god, that he would rather be an Abyssinian slave with a cut-off nose, tending goats at the top of a mountain until death comes to him, then to shoot an arrow against either of these two parties, whether it misses or hits its target. So refrain from fighting, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you." The people said: "Leave us alone, for we will never abandon the wife of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for anything."[203]

1.5.2. Ka'b ibn Soor

He was one of the senior Tâbi'oon. He did his utmost and pushed himself beyond his limits, playing a role that many men would be unable to play. He persisted in striving to bring about reconciliation until the thing that he was trying to prevent happened. He died as a victim of his efforts, slain as he stood between the two armies calling each to put down their weapons and refer to the Book of Allah (ﷻ) for judgement.[204]

1.5.3. Al-Qa'qâ' ibn 'Amr at-Tameemi

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent al-Qa'qâ' ibn 'Amr at-Tameemi (رضي الله عنه) on a mission of reconciliation to Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, instructing him: "Meet with these two men, call them to brotherhood and unity and warn them of the seriousness of differences and division." So al-Qa'qâ' went to Basra, and he started with 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها). He said to her: "What has brought you to Basra, O my mother?" She said to him: "O my son, (we have come) for the purpose of setting things straight among the people." Al-Qa'qâ' asked her to send word to Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr asking them to come, and he spoke to them in her presence.

❖ The discussion between al-Qa'qâ' and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr

When they came, he asked them why they had come, and they said the same as 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) had said: "(We have come) for the purpose of setting things straight among the people." He said to them: "Tell me, in what way are you going to set things straight? For by Allah, if we agree with you, then we will join you in your efforts; and if we disagree with you, we will not join you." They said: "The murderers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) must be executed; if they are left alone and are not punished in accordance with the Qur'an, this will be

forsaking the Qur'an and disregarding its rulings. If the prescribed punishment is carried out on them, this will be keeping the Qur'an alive." Al-Qa'qâ' said: "In Basra, there were six hundred of the murderers of 'Uthmân, and you killed them all except one man, namely Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr as-Sa'di. When he fled from you, he sought protection with his people of Banu Sa'd. When you wanted to seize him from them and kill him, his people prevented you from doing that; six thousand men got angry for his sake and deserted you and stood against you as one. If you leave Ḥarqooṣ alone and do not kill him, you will be abandoning your principles and what you are calling others to and demanding 'Ali to do. But if you fight Banu Sa'd because of Ḥarqooṣ, and they overwhelm and defeat you, then you will have come to the opposite of what you are trying to achieve; you will have made them stronger, and you will be greatly harmed. By going after Ḥarqooṣ, you are angering Rabee'ah and Muḍar in this land, as they have come together to fight you and defeat you in support of Banu Sa'd. This is what happened with 'Ali and the murderers of 'Uthmân who are in his army."

❖ The solution according to al-Qa'qâ'

He advocated deliberation and calming things down first, then carrying out the prescribed punishment. The Mother of the Believers and those who were with her were influenced by the logical argument of al-Qa'qâ'. She said to him: "So what do you suggest, O Qa'qâ'?" He said: "I say that the best thing is to calm things down. It is essential to give it time until the murderers of 'Uthmân are brought to justice. Then when the division is ended, and the Ummah is united behind Amir al-Mu'mineen, he will be free to deal with the killers of 'Uthmân. If you give your allegiance to 'Ali and support him, this will be a good sign and a blessing, and 'Ali will be able to avenge 'Uthmân. But if you refuse and continue to be stubborn and insist on fighting, this will be a bad sign and will lead to the diminishing of

Muslim power. So be on the side of caution, and be the means of good as you have always been; do not expose us to ruin, because that will affect you too, and Allah (ﷻ) may bring about our doom and yours. By Allah, I say this and call you to it, and I am worried lest we do not reach any agreement before Allah (ﷻ) brings destruction upon this Ummah, which has lost a great deal and been stricken by calamity. What has befallen it is very serious; it is not like one man killing another, or a group killing a man, or even a tribe killing a tribe." They were convinced by the sincere and persuasive words of al-Qa'qâ' and agreed to his call for reconciliation. They said to him: "You have spoken well. Go back, and if 'Ali comes and tells us the same as you have said, the matter will be settled inshallah." So al-Qa'qâ' went back to 'Ali in Dhu Qâr, having succeeded in his mission, and told 'Ali about what had happened. 'Ali was pleased with that, and the people were about to reach a peaceful conclusion, regardless of who approved or disapproved.[205]

❖ Good signs of a deal between the two parties

When al-Qa'qâ' went back and told 'Ali what had happened, 'Ali (ﷺ) sent two envoys[206] to 'Â'ishah and Ṭalḥah and the people who were with them, to verify what al-Qa'qâ' ibn 'Amr had said. They came to 'Ali (ﷺ) and told him that they were still agreeing with what al-Qa'qâ' had said. So 'Ali set out and came to a halt near them, and the members of various tribes on each side met with one another, Muḍar with Muḍar, Rabee'ah with Rabee'ah, Yemenis with Yemenis. None of them had any doubt that a peace deal was imminent. They camped close to one another and went out to meet one another, and they did not talk about anything except the peace deal.[207] Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) decided to move on, and he announced his important decision: "I will leave tomorrow, so leave and go back (meaning to Basra). No one should come with us tomorrow who contributed to the murder of 'Uthmân in any way."[208]

1.6. The outbreak of fighting

1.6.1. The role of the Saba'is in the outbreak of fighting

In the camp of 'Ali (ﷺ), there were some of those evildoers and rebels who had killed 'Uthmân (ﷺ). There were those who were not known by name, those who were known but were protected by their tribes, those concerning whom there was no evidence about their role in the murder of 'Uthmân, and those who had hypocrisy in their hearts but were not able to show it openly.[209] The followers of Ibn Saba' were eager to fan the flames of fitnah so that they could avoid justice.[210]

When the people had settled down in their camps, 'Ali came out, as did Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr. They met and spoke about that which they differed on, and they did not see anything better than reconciling and giving up war when they saw that things were becoming clearer. They parted on that note. 'Ali (ﷺ) returned to his camp, and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr returned to theirs. Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr sent word to the commanders of their army, and 'Ali sent word to the commanders of his army, apart from those who had besieged 'Uthmân (ﷺ).

The people went to sleep intending to reconcile and avoid trouble, and they did not doubt that there would be a peace deal. They were close to one another, going out to meet one another, and not talking about or planning anything but reconciliation. Those who had been behind the turmoil spent their worst night ever because they felt that the end was looming for them. They spent the entire night in discussion, and one of them said: "As for Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, we know where they stand, but as for 'Ali, we did not know where he stands until today. That was when he told the people to move on the next day, but none of those who had helped in the murder of 'Uthmân

in any way were to move with them. And, by Allah, the people's view concerning us is the same; if they reconcile, then their agreement will be to shed our blood."[211] Ibn as-Sawda' Abdullah ibn Saba', who was the leader, spoke and said: "O people, your opportunity will be when the people (from both camps) are mixing; show kindness to them, and when the people meet tomorrow, start the fight and do not give them any time to think. The ones whom you are with will have no option but to defend themselves. Allah will distract 'Ali and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, and those with them will be distracted from that which you hate. So think about it and then disperse without making the people suspicious about you."[212] So they agreed to start the fight secretly.

The next morning, they came when it was still dark and their neighbours were unaware of what they were doing. Those from Muḍar went to their counterparts from Muḍar, those from Rabee'ah went to their counterparts from Rabee'ah, those from Yemen went to their counterparts among their fellow Yemenis. They attacked them, and the people of Basra started fighting back, each group fighting those who attacked them. Az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and some prominent figures from Egypt came out and sent word to the right flank, who were from Rabee'ah, led by 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Hishâm, and the left flank, who were led by 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Atâb ibn Usayd, while they remained steadfast in the core. They said: "What is this?" They said: "The people of Kufah attacked us this night... We knew that 'Ali would not give up until he shed blood and transgressed the sacred limits, and that he is not going to agree with us." Then they retreated with the people of Basra, and the people of Basra shot arrows at those who attacked them until they pushed them back to their camp.[213]

'Ali (ﷺ) and the people of Kufah heard the noise. The Saba'is had planted a man close to 'Ali (ﷺ) so that he could tell him

what they wanted him to hear. When he said: "What's going on?," that man said: "We have been taken by surprise. Some of them attacked us at night, and we pushed them back." 'Ali (ﷺ) said to his commander on the right flank: "Stay on the right flank," and he said to his commander on the left flank: "Stay on the left flank." The Saba'is continued their efforts to keep the battle raging.[214] Despite the way the battle began, the two sides did not rush to fight until they found out what happened. 'Ali (ﷺ) and those who were with him all agreed not to start fighting until the other side started, so as to establish that they were the wrongdoers. Even if they engaged in fighting, they agreed that they would not kill anyone who was running away and would not finish off anyone who was wounded. But the Saba'is were trying hard to instigate the fighting.[215]

On the other hand, Ṭalḥah, who was on his mount with the people rushing around him, called out: "O people, can you listen?" But they continued to rush and did not listen to him. He did not say any more than: "Woe to you, moths to the flame, and greed is killing them!"[216] Were there any moths other than those Saba'is, and was there any greed other than among them? Rather the attempts to bring about reconciliation continued until the last moment of the battle.

From this discussion, the impact of Ibn Saba', and his helpers the Saba'is, on the battle becomes clear. We can also see clearly, beyond any shadow of a doubt, the keenness of the Companions (ﷺ) to reconcile and unite. This is the truth which is confirmed by the texts and of which one may feel certain.[217]

Before discussing the stages of the battle, we should point out that the impact of the Saba'is in the Battle of the Camel is something that all scholars agree upon, whether they called them the evildoers, thugs of the two parties, the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), the fools or hooligans, or they referred to them clearly as Saba'is.[218] The following are some texts that confirm this:

(a) It says in *Akhbâr al-Baṣrah,* by 'Umar ibn Shubbah, that those to whom the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was attributed were afraid that the two parties might reconcile and agree to kill them, so they started the fight between them and there happened what happened.[219]

(b) Imam aṭ-Ṭaḥḥawi said: "The fitnah of the camel broke out against the wishes of both 'Ali and Ṭalḥah; rather it was stirred up by the wrongdoers against the wishes of the aforementioned."[220]

(c) Al-Bâqillâni said: "A deal was reached, and they parted when both groups were content with the deal, but the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) were afraid that they would be caught and brought to justice. So they got together and discussed the matter, and they different concerning it; then they agreed to split into two groups and start the fight at dawn in both camps, when they were scattered throughout the camps. The group in 'Ali's camp would shout out: 'Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr have betrayed us!', and the group in the camp of Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr would shout out: "Ali has betrayed us!' They succeeded in their plan, and fighting broke out. Each of the two parties was limiting itself to defending itself and trying not to let the bloodshed go beyond that. This is the correct approach on the part of both parties, showing restraint for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) as fighting broke out and they had to defend themselves. This is what happened according to the sound reports, and this is what we believe."[221]

(d) Al-Qâḍi 'Abdul-Jabbâr narrated the views of the scholars, which is that 'Ali, Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and 'Â'ishah reached a peace deal and agreed to avoid war and to defer dealing with the issue (of 'Uthmân's murderers). Those of the enemies of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) who were in the camp did not like that, and they were afraid that the Muslims would focus their efforts on dealing with them, so they planned to disrupt that, as is well known, and that was achieved.[222]

(e) Al-Qâḍi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi said: "'Ali came to Basra, and the two groups came together to talk, but the people of whims and desires

did not leave them alone; they hastened to shed blood, and war broke out. There were a large number of thugs who decided to start the fight so that the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) would not be brought to justice. One person in the army could spoil its plans, so what if there were one thousand?"[223]

(f) Ibn Ḥazm said: "The evidence for that is that the two armies drew close together and no fighting broke out, but when night came, the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) realised that any agreement reached by the two parties would be against them. They attacked the camp of Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr at night, wielding the sword against them. The people had to defend themselves, so they pushed them back until they reached the camp of 'Ali (ﷺ). Then 'Ali's people had to defend themselves, each group no doubt thinking that the other had initiated the fighting. There was a great deal of confusion, but no one went beyond defending himself. The evildoers and killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) persisted in their attempts to make the fighting continue, and each group thought that it was doing the right thing in defending itself. Ṭalḥah was hit by a stray arrow while he was standing, not knowing what was happening. The arrow struck a wound in his lower leg, which he had received at Uḥud while defending the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He left the battlefield and died soon after (ﷺ). Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) left while the battle raged; he was killed after he had withdrawn from the battle, in Wadi al-Sibâ', which is less than a day's march from Basra. That is what happened."[224]

Adh-Dhahabi said: "The Battle of the Camel was stirred up by the foolish among the two groups."[225] He also said: "The two groups had reconciled, and neither 'Ali nor Ṭalḥah intended to fight; rather their intention was to bring about unity. But the thugs of the two parties traded arrows, and fighting broke out and engulfed everyone."[226]

In the book *Duwal al-Islam* it says: "Fighting broke out because of the thugs, and 'Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr were no longer in control."[227]

Dr. Sulayman ibn Ḥamad al-'Awdah said: "We may say that the report of aṭ-Ṭabari, which speaks of the Saba'i role in the Battle of the Camel, is referring to the same people who are described as thugs in other reports. Even if these thuggish groups, which are referred to in other reports, did not have a direct connection to the Saba'is or share the same aims and goals, it is possible that these thuggish groups became the element that Ibn Saba' and his helpers took advantage of, which is usually the case in some demagogic movements that may be taken advantage of by some evildoers."[228]

We should not forget that the atmosphere of turmoil played a major role in these events. There can be no doubt that at times of chaos, people may not be able to see things that others can see very clearly. They may have their own justification for doing things while others can clearly see the reality of what they are doing, without any effort. The darkness of turmoil is sufficient to prevent a person from thinking carefully and seeing clearly.[229] For example, we may note that al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays, who is one of those who lived through the events of this battle, went out with the aim of joining 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), but he was met by Abu Bakrah, who said: "O Aḥnaf, go back, for I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: 'If two Muslims face one another with swords, then the slayer and the slain will be in hell.' I said — or it was said: 'O Messenger of Allah, as for the slayer (his case is clear), but what about the one who was slain?' He said: 'He wanted to kill his companion.'"[230]

Fighting alongside 'Ali (ﷺ) was right and correct, and whoever was killed fighting alongside him is a martyr and will have two rewards. However, Abu Bakrah (ﷺ) was quoting a hadith that was mentioned in a different context to that in which 'Ali (ﷺ) was fighting those who were transgressing. This was his own understanding, but it was not appropriate in 'Ali's case. From this report, we understand that 'Ali (ﷺ) faced many obstacles when he

fought others, including fatwas like these, which reflect piety more than the correct fatwa issued for the correct situation.[231] Al-Aḥnaf refused to join 'Ali (ﷺ), so he was not present with either side in the Battle of the Camel.[232]

Furthermore, az-Zubayr (ﷺ), who was one of the main figures in the battle, explains to us more about the reality of the matter: "This is the fitnah that we were told about." His freed slave said to him: "Are you calling it fitnah when you are fighting in it?" Az-Zubayr said: "Woe to you! Sometimes we see clearly, and sometimes we do not see clearly. There was no matter in which I was uncertain where I stood except this matter, for I do not know whether I should go ahead or give up."[233] Ṭalḥah also referred to that when he said: "We used to be one against others, but now we are like two mountains of iron, each seeking out the other."[234]

On the other hand, the companions of 'Ali (ﷺ) also confirmed that there was fitnah. 'Ammâr (ﷺ) said in Kufah, regarding 'Â'ishah's coming out on the campaign: "By Allah, she is the wife of your Prophet in this world and in the hereafter but Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her."[235]

1.6.2. The first round of the Battle of the Camel

The Saba'is intensified their efforts to stir up fighting, attacking the other side and inciting each side against the other. A tough battle broke out, which was the Battle of the Camel. It is called that because the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) was in the midst of the army of Basra during the second round, riding a camel that had been given to her in Makkah by Ya'la ibn Umayyah, who had brought it from Yemen. She set out on this camel from Makkah to Basra, then she rode it during the battle.

The battle took place on Friday, 16 Jumâda ath-Thâniyah 36 AH, in an area called az-Zâbooqah, near Basra. 'Ali was upset about

what happened, and his caller called out: "Stop fighting, O people!" But no one listened; everyone was busy fighting his opponent.[236] There were two rounds in the Battle of the Camel; in the first round, the two commanders of the army of Basra were Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, and this round lasted from dawn until just before noon.[237] 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) called out to his army, as Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr called out to theirs: "Do not kill anyone who wants to flee, do not finish off anyone who is wounded, and do not chase anyone who is leaving the battlefield and giving up the fight."[238]

Az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) asked his son Abdullah to pay off his debts and said: "No one is killed today except the wrongdoer or one who is wronged, and I think that I will be killed wrongfully; what I am most worried about is my debt."[239] At that point, a man came to az-Zubayr and offered to kill 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) by infiltrating his army and then killing him. Az-Zubayr objected strongly to that and said: "No, no believer should kill a believer, for faith protects a believer from killing."[240] Az-Zubayr had no desire to kill 'Ali or anyone else who was innocent of the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه). Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali called az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) and spoke to him kindly and gently. It was said that he reminded him of a hadith that he had heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who had told az-Zubayr: "You are going to fight him ('Ali) unlawfully."[241] This hadith has no sound chain of narration, though.[242]

Some reports explain that the reason why az-Zubayr left just before the battle was because he realised that 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (رضي الله عنه) was on the other side. Even though he did not narrate from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) the hadith: " 'Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,"[243] he may have heard it from other Companions, because it was very well known.[244] Some reports give as the reason for his leaving his doubt as to whether his stance towards this turmoil (fitnah, as he called it) was correct.[245] According

to another report that suggests his reason for leaving, Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) reminded him of his blood ties with 'Ali (ﷺ) by saying: "How would Ṣafiyyah bint 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib feel if you fought 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib with your sword?"[246] Whatever the reasons, az-Zubayr left the battlefield and was met by Ibn Jarmooz, who killed him,[247] as we shall see in detail below.

Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) was aware of his goal, which was to set things straight, but when he saw that fighting had broken out instead of peace, he left and did not fight. The words of Ibn 'Abbâs, "Will you fight 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib with your sword?", imply an unspoken question: 'or have you come to set things straight and bring unity?'[248] As a result of this conversation, az-Zubayr left the battlefield and departed. Perhaps numerous, interconnected factors played a role in his decision to abandon the battlefield.

As for Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullâh (ﷺ), az-Zubayr's second-in-command of the army of Basra, he was wounded at the beginning of the battle when he was struck by a stray arrow. It is not known who shot it, but it was a direct hit and caused him to bleed heavily. His soldiers said to him: "O Abu Muḥammad, you are wounded. Go in among their houses so that you can be treated." Ṭalḥah said to his slave: "Carry me, and look for a suitable place for me." He entered Basra and was placed in a house there to be treated, but his wound continued to bleed until he died in that house. Then he was buried in Basra (ﷺ).[249]

As for the report indicating that az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah (may Allah be pleased with them) urged the people to carry on fighting, and that az-Zubayr only left the battlefield when he saw that the people of Basra were going to be defeated, this report is not sound.[250] It is contradicted by that which is proven of the dignity and sound character of the Companions (ﷺ). It is also contrary to the sound reports stating that the army of the Camel only went out to set things

straight and bring about reconciliation. How could this alleged action of az-Zubayr (ﷺ) be in harmony with the aim for which he left Makkah and went to Basra, namely to set things straight among the people? In fact, the attitude of az-Zubayr (ﷺ) was one of keenness to set things straight up to the very last moment. Al-Ḥâkim, via Abu Ḥarb ibn Abil-Aswad ad-Du'ali, narrated that az-Zubayr (ﷺ) strove to bring about reconciliation between the sides, but when the battle began and chaos prevailed, az-Zubayr left the battlefield,[251] as did Ṭalḥah. He had come to set things straight, not to shed blood. With regard to the killing of Ṭalḥah (ﷺ), that occurred at the beginning of the battle, as was clearly stated by al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays.[252]

Az-Zubayr departed the battlefield, and Ṭalḥah died (may Allah be pleased with them both). With the fall of the slain and wounded, the first round of the Battle of the Camel ended, and the army of 'Ali (ﷺ) had prevailed. 'Ali (ﷺ) had been following the progress of the battle and saw the slain and wounded on both sides; he was distressed and saddened by that. He went to his son al-Ḥasan and embraced him. 'Ali (ﷺ) began weeping and saying to him: "O my son, would that your father had died twenty years before this day." Al-Ḥasan said: "O my father, I warned you about this." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "I did not think that it would go this far. What good is life after this? What good can be hoped for after this?"[253]

1.6.3. The second round of the Battle of the Camel

News reached the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) of the fighting that had taken place. She came out on her camel, surrounded by the Azdi tribes and accompanied by Ka'b ibn Soor, to whom she had given a muṣḥaf to use to call the people to stop fighting. The Mother of the Believers advanced. She hoped that people would listen to her because of her status in their hearts, and that she would be able to stop them fighting one another and stop the fitnah that had

begun to spread.[254] Ka'b held up the muṣḥaf and went before the army of Basra, calling to the army of 'Ali (ﷺ), saying: "O people, I am Ka'b ibn Soor, the judge of Basra; I call you to the Book of Allah, to act upon it and bring about reconciliation on that basis." The Saba'is, who were in the forefront of the army of 'Ali (ﷺ), were afraid that Ka'b's effort would succeed, so they targeted him with their arrows as one man, and he died with the muṣḥaf in his hand.[255]

The arrows of the Saba'is also struck the camel and howdah[256] of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), and she started calling out: "O my sons, Allah, Allah, remember Allah and the Day of Reckoning, and refrain from fighting!" The Saba'is did not respond to her; they continued striking the army of Basra. 'Ali (ﷺ) was in the rear, ordering his troops to refrain from fighting and not to attack the Basrans, but the Saba'is in the forefront of his army did not respond to him; they persisted in advancing, attacking and fighting. When 'Â'ishah saw that they were not responding to her call and saw Ka'b ibn Soor killed in front of her, she said: "O people, curse the killers of 'Uthmân and their supporters." 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) began to pray against the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and to curse them, and the people of Basra raised their voices in supplication against the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and their supporters, and they cursed them. 'Ali (ﷺ) heard the supplication coming in loud voices from the army of Basra and asked: "What is this?" They said: "It is 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) praying against the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and the people praying with her." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Pray with me against the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and their supporters, and curse them." So the army of 'Ali (ﷺ) raised their voices, cursing the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and praying against them.[257] 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "O Allah, curse the killers of 'Uthmân in the plains and in the mountains."[258]

The fighting intensified and spread. The people fought with spears until the spears broke,[259] then they unsheathed their swords

and fought until the swords broke, and finally they fought at close quarters.[260] The Saba'is directed their efforts towards hamstringing the camel and killing 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), the Mother of the Believers, so the army of Basra rushed to protect 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) and her camel. They fought to defend the camel, and they killed anyone who grabbed its reins. The battle raging in front of the camel was so fierce and violent that the howdah began to resemble a hedgehog because of all the arrows that had been shot at it.[261] Many Muslims from the tribes of al-Azd and Banu Ḍabbah and young men of Quraysh were killed around the camel, after displaying unparalleled bravery and courage.[262]

'Â'ishah (ﷺ) was very upset and frustrated. She had not wanted any fighting, but fighting broke out despite her wishes, and she ended up in the midst of the chaos, calling out for it to stop, but to no avail. Everyone who took hold of the camel's reins was killed, then Muhammad ibn Ṭalḥah (as-Sajjâd) came and took hold of the reins, and he said to his mother the Mother of the Believers: "O my mother, what do you want me to do?" She said: "Be like the better of the two sons of Adam," meaning that he should refrain from fighting. He sheathed his sword, after having unsheathed it, and he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him.[263]

Also killed was 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Itâb ibn Usayd, who tried to kill al-Ashtar even if it meant that he died too. He wrestled him, and they both fell to the ground. 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Itâb said to those who were around him: "Kill me and Mâlik,"[264] because of his hatred for him due to the prominent role he had played in inciting the people against 'Uthmân (ﷺ). But the people did not know al-Ashtar as 'Mâlik', and his time had not yet come. If 'Abdur-Raḥmân had said 'al-Ashtar', many swords would have struck al-Ashtar.[265]

As for Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, he fought in an unparalleled fashion, throwing himself among the swords. He was taken from among the slain with forty-odd wounds, the most severe and last of

which was inflicted by al-Ashtar. Due to the latter's hatred for Ibn az-Zubayr, *he did not sit on his horse when he hit him; rather he stood up* in the stirrups and struck Ibn az-Zubayr on the head, thinking that he had killed him.[266] A large number of people were also killed from the tribes of Banu 'Adiyy, Banu Ḍabbah and al-Azd. Banu Ḍabbah showed a great deal of courage and sacrifice for the Mother of the Believers.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), by virtue of the wisdom, strength and military skill with which he had been blessed, realised that as long as the camel remained on the battlefield, the fighting would continue and a large number of people would be killed. The people of the camel would not be defeated or give up fighting as long as the Mother of the Believers remained on the battlefield. Her staying on the battlefield also posed a danger to her life; the howdah in which she was sitting was bristling with arrows like a hedgehog.[267]

'Ali (ﷺ) ordered some of his troops, including Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, the brother of the Mother of the Believers, and Abdullah ibn Badeel, to hamstring the camel and take 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) out of the howdah and to the ground; in other words, they were to strike the camel's feet with their swords.[268] Her brother Muḥammad and Abdullah ibn Badeel carried her howdah and placed it in front of 'Ali (ﷺ), who ordered that she be taken into the house of Abdullah ibn Badeel.[269] 'Ali's military intuition proved to be correct; as soon as Mother of the Believers left the battlefield, the motive that was making the people of Basra eager to fight to the death disappeared, and they turned and fled. If he had not taken this step, the battle would have continued until the entire army of Basra, which was defending the camel, had been destroyed or the army of 'Ali (ﷺ) had been defeated.

When the rout began, 'Ali (ﷺ) or his caller shouted out to his army, telling them not to pursue anyone who was running away, not

to finish off anyone who was wounded, and not to take any booty except for equipment or weapons that had been brought to the battlefield or the camp only; they were not to take anything more than that. He also forbade them to enter the houses. Not only that; 'Ali (ﷺ) also said to the people of Basra who had fought him that if any of them found any of his property with one of 'Ali's companions, he had the right to take it back. A man found a group from 'Ali's army cooking some meat in a pot that belonged to him. He took the pot from them and threw away the meat that was in it, out of spite.[270]

1.6.4. The number of people killed

This intense battle led to a large number of people being killed, but there are differing reports as to the actual numbers. Al-Mas'oodi said that these differences were due to the bias of the narrators.[271]

Qatâdah stated that the number of people killed at the Battle of the Camel was twenty thousand.[272] It seems that this is greatly exaggerated, because the number of the two armies put together was close to this or less. The Râfiḍi Shia Abu Makhnaf exaggerated greatly because of his bias, and he did wrong when he thought that he was doing right. He said that the twenty thousand were from among the people of Basra.[273] Sayf stated that the number was ten thousand, half from among the companions of 'Ali (ﷺ) and half from among the companions of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ). According to another report, he said: "It was said that the number was fifteen thousand: five thousand from among the people of Kufah and ten thousand from among the people of Basra; half of them were killed during the first battle and half during the second round."[274] But these two reports are weak because of the interruptions in their chains of narration and other faults; they are also grossly overstated. 'Umar ibn Shaybah mentioned, with his chain of narration, that the number of slain was more than six thousand, but this report is also weak in its chain of

narration.[275] Al-Ya'qoobi exaggerated further and gave a higher figure; he put the number of slain at thirty-two thousand.[276] This figure is highly inflated; the reasons for this overstatement include the following:

(a) The desire of the enemies of the Companions, namely the Saba'is and their followers, to deepen the dispute and division among the members of the Ummah who are united by the love of the Companions and who are following their example, after that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

(b) The contribution of some poets and ignorant people from numerous tribes to inflating and magnifying the number, so as to match the poetry that they attributed to some of their leaders and knights. In addition to that, the storytellers wanted to attract people's attention with the exciting events of which they spoke.

(c) The building of confidence for the followers of the thugs and Saba'is in order to prove the success of their plans and arrangements.[277]

As for the true number of people slain in the Battle of the Camel, it is probably very small, for the following reasons:

- ❖ The short duration of the fight. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated with a sound chain of narration[278] that the combat started in the afternoon and that by the time the sun set, no one who had been defending the camel was still there.
- ❖ The defensive nature of the fighting, since each side was merely defending itself and doing no more than that.
- ❖ The true number of those slain at the Battle of the Camel is regarded as very low in comparison to the number of Muslim martyrs at the Battle of Yarmook (3,000) and the

Battle of Qâdisiyyah (8,500), and those were battles that went on for a number of days. This is also taking into account the ferocity and intensity of those other battles, which were decisive battles in the history of nations.

❖ Khaleefah ibn Khayyâṭ narrated a list of those among the slain of the Battle of the Camel whose names were known; there were approximately one hundred names.[279] If we assume that the total number was double that, this would mean that the number of people slain at the Battle of the Camel was no more than two hundred. This is what Dr. Khâlid ibn Muhammad al-Ghayth suggests is most likely, in his dissertation *Istishhâd 'Uthmân wa Waq'at al-Jamal fi Marwiyât Sayf ibn 'Umar fi Tareekh aṭ-Ṭabari — Dirâsah Naqdiyyah* (The martyrdom of 'Uthmân and the Battle of the Camel in the reports of Sayf ibn 'Umar in *Tareekh aṭ-Ṭabari* — A critical study).[280]

1.6.5. Is it true that Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam killed Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullâh?

Many reports indicate that the killer of Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullâh (رضي الله عنه) was Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam.[281] However, if one studies these reports, it becomes clear that Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam is innocent of this accusation for the following reasons:

(a) Ibn Katheer said: "It was said that the one who shot this arrow was Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam, and it was said that the one who shot this arrow was someone else. In my view, the latter is more likely, even though the former is a well-known view. And Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) knows best."[282]

(b) Ibn al-'Arabi said: "They said that Marwân killed Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullâh, but how can anyone know that except the One

Who knows the unseen? It was not narrated by anyone trustworthy."[283]

(c) Muḥibb ad-Deen al-Khaṭeeb said: "This report about Ṭalḥah and Marwân is a mystery; no one knows where it came from."[284]

(d) The reason given for Marwân's desire to kill Ṭalḥah (ﷺ) — that Marwân accused Ṭalḥah of helping in the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) — is invalid. There is no proof by any sound chain of narration that any of the Companions helped in the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ).

(e) At the Battle of the Camel, Marwân and Ṭalḥah were both on the same side, which was the side of those who were calling for putting things right among the people.[285]

(f) Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) appointed Marwân in charge of Madinah and Makkah. If it were true that Marwân had done this, Mu'âwiyah would not have put him in charge of the Muslims in the places that are most sacred before Allah (ﷻ).

(g) There is a report from Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhâri.*[286] Bukhari is known for being very thorough and careful in accepting reports; if it were true that Marwân killed Ṭalḥah (ﷺ), that would have been sufficient reason to reject his reports and question his character.[287]

1.6.6. The call of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) after the battle

As soon as the battle started to die down, the caller of 'Ali (ﷺ) cried out: "Do not finish off anyone who is wounded, do not pursue anyone who is fleeing, do not enter any house. Whoever lays down his weapon is safe, and whoever locks his door is safe." His army had no right to any booty except what had been brought onto

the battlefield of weapons and mounts, and nothing beyond that. The caller of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) informed those who had fought him of the people of Basra that if one of them found any of his property with 'Ali's troops, he could take it back.[288]

Some people thought that the army of 'Ali (ﷺ) was going to distribute the female captives among themselves, so they spoke about that and spread that notion among the people. 'Ali (ﷺ) soon surprised them when he announced: "You have no right to any female captive, and the estates are to be divided according to the laws of Allah (ﷻ). Any woman whose husband has been killed must observe 'iddah of four months and ten days." They objected to that, asking: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, is their blood permissible for us and not their women?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "This is the right approach when fighting people of the qiblah (fellow Muslims)." Then he said: "Bring your arrows and draw lots concerning 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), for she is the one who was leading these people!" They were shocked and said: "We ask Allah for forgiveness." It had now become clear to them that what they were saying and thinking was very wrong. In order to please them, though, 'Ali (ﷺ) gave each of them five hundred from the public treasury.[289]

1.6.7. Checking on the slain and praying for mercy for them

After the battle ended, 'Ali (ﷺ) went out with a group of his companions to check on the slain. He saw Muhammad ibn Ṭalḥah (as-Sajjâd) and said: "*Inna Lillâhi wa inna ilayhi râji'oon* (Verily, to Allah we belong and unto Him is our return). By Allah, he was a righteous young man." Then he sat down sorrowfully and prayed for forgiveness and mercy for the slain, and he spoke highly of them.[290]

After that, he went back to his house and saw his wife and two daughters weeping for 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and his relatives and for az-

Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and others among their Qurayshi relatives. It was narrated that he said to them: "I hope we will be among those of whom Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And We shall remove from their breasts any deep feeling of bitterness [that they may have]. [So they will be like] brothers facing each other on thrones.﴾ *(Qur'an 15: 47).*" Then he said: "Who are they if not us? Who are they if not us?" And he kept repeating it until the narrator wished that he would fall silent.[291]

1.6.8. The allegiance of the people of Basra

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was very keen to unite the people, to respect the people under his authority and to treat them honourably. This treatment had a far reaching effect by convincing the people of Basra to swear allegiance to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). In the evening following the Battle of the Camel, he put the captives in a special place. When he prayed the dawn prayer, he asked for Moosa ibn Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullâh. He brought him close, welcomed him and seated him next to him, and asked him how he and his brothers were. Then he told him: "We did not seize your land because we want to take it away from you; we seized it lest the people plunder it." He gave him the harvest of the land and said: "O son of my brother, if you have any need, come to us." He did the same with his brother 'Imrân ibn Ṭalḥah, and the two brothers swore allegiance to him. When the other captives saw that, they entered upon 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) to swear allegiance to him, and he accepted their allegiance. He accepted allegiance from each tribe, one by one.[292]

He also asked about Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam, saying: "There is compassion for him because of blood ties; in addition to that, he is one of the noble young men of Quraysh." Marwân sent word to al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Ibn 'Abbâs asking them to speak to 'Ali on his behalf. 'Ali said: "He is safe. Let him go wherever he wants." Because of this generous and noble treatment, Marwân did not want

to leave until he had sworn allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ).[293] Marwân (ﷺ) praised the actions of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), telling his son al-Ḥasan: "I have never seen anyone more generous in victory than your father. As soon as we began to flee on the day of the Camel, his caller called out: 'Do not finish off anyone who is wounded, do not pursue anyone who is fleeing.'"[294]

Thus the people of Basra swore allegiance to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). He appointed his nephew Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) as their governor and Ziyâd ibn Abeehi in charge of the land tax. 'Ali (ﷺ) wanted to stay there longer, but he hastened to leave because of Mâlik (al-Ashtar). Al-Ashtar had been hoping to become governor of Basra; when he found out that Ibn 'Abbâs had been appointed to the post, he became angry and left with his people. 'Ali (ﷺ) was afraid that he might cause trouble, so he went quickly with the remainder of his army and caught up with him. 'Ali (ﷺ) reprimanded for leaving, but he pretended that he had not heard anything else about him.[295]

1.6.9. The hadith of Abu Bakrah from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "If two Muslims face one another with swords, then the slayer and the slain will be in hell"[296]

Al-Qurtubi said: "Our scholars said that this hadith, the hadith of Abu Bakrah, is not speaking about the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair [and just]. The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and

reconciliation between your two [contending] brothers: And fear Allah that ye may receive Mercy﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 9-10).*

"Allah (ﷻ) enjoined fighting the group that is in the wrong. If the Muslims fail to fight the group that is in the wrong, then one of the obligations enjoined by Allah (ﷻ) will have been abandoned. This proves that the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), 'The slayer and the slain will be in hell,' are not about the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), because they only fought because of a misunderstanding." Al-Qurṭubi also said: "If what is required of Muslims, in the case of any difference between two groups of Muslims, is to run away from it and stay in their houses and break their swords, then no ḥadd punishments would be carried out and no falsehood would be confronted. Then the hypocrites and evildoers would find it easy to violate all sacred limits, confiscate the Muslims' wealth, take their women captive and shed their blood, because they would gang up against them, and the Muslims would refrain from confronting them by saying: 'This is fitnah. We are forbidden to fight in this case; we are instructed to be passive and run away from it.'"[297]

An-Nawawi said: "With regard to the slayer and the slain being in hell, this applies to cases where there is no (Sharia) justification, when they are fighting for tribal reasons and the like. Moreover, what is meant by hell is that they deserve it and may be punished therein or may be pardoned by Allah (ﷻ). This is the correct view. One may judge or evaluate any incident of fighting between Muslims on this basis, but it should be noted that the blood that was shed among the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) is not included in this warning. According to the view of Ahl as-Sunnah, which is the correct view, we should think positively of them and refrain from debating about the disputes among them. We should understand their fighting on the basis that they had what they thought was a valid reason for it. They did not intend to commit

sin or to seek worldly gains; rather each group believed that it was in the right and that its opposite number was transgressing, so it was obliged to fight it and bring it back to compliance with the command of Allah (ﷻ). Some of them were right, and some of them were wrong, but they are to be excused for their misjudgement; if the one who makes a mistake has based his decision on what he thinks is a valid reason, there is no sin on him. The view of Ahl as-Sunnah is that 'Ali (ﷺ) was the one who was in the right in this conflict. The issues were so ambiguous that some of the Companions were uncertain, so they stayed away from both groups and did not fight; they were not certain who was in the right, so they refrained from helping them."[298]

1.6.10. The date of the Battle of the Camel

The historians differed concerning the date of the Battle of the Camel, and there are numerous opinions, including the following:

(a) Khaleefah ibn Khayyâṭ narrated via Qatâdah that the two groups met on a Thursday halfway through the month of Jumâda al-Âkhirah in 36 AH, and that the battle took place on Friday.[299]

(b) 'Umar ibn Shabbah narrated that the battle took place in the middle of Jumâda al-Âkhirah in 36 AH.[300]

(c) Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated via al-Wâqidi that the battle took place on Thursday, 10 Jumâda al-Âkhirah 36 AH.[301]

(d) Al-Mas'oodi stated that the battle took place on Thursday, 10 Jumâda al-Oola.

The most correct opinion is that narrated by Khaleefah ibn Khayyâṭ via Qatâdah, as the chain of narration of this report is the soundest concerning this matter.

1.6.11. "Shouldn't we leave them alone when they are Muslim women?"

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) came to the house where the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) was staying, and he asked for permission to enter. He greeted her with salâm, and she welcomed him. The women in the house of Banu Khalaf were weeping for those who had been killed, including Abdullah and 'Uthmân, the sons of Khalaf. Abdullah had been killed fighting on 'Â'ishah's side, and 'Uthmân had been killed fighting on 'Ali's side. When 'Ali (ﷺ) entered, Ṣafiyyah, the wife of Abdullah, Umm Ṭalḥah, said to him: "May Allah make your children orphans as you have made my children orphans!" 'Ali (ﷺ) did not respond. When he left, she repeated her words, and he again kept quiet. A man said to him: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, are you going to keep quiet when this woman is saying what you can hear?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Woe to you. We were commanded to leave women alone when they were polytheists, so shouldn't we leave them alone when they are Muslims?"[302]

1.6.12. Abu Bakrah ath-Thaqafi's request to not be appointed as governor of Basra

'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Bakrah ath-Thaqafi came to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) and swore allegiance to him. 'Ali asked about his father, saying: "Where is the one who is sick?" 'Abdur-Raḥmân said: "By Allah, he is indeed sick, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, but he is very keen to please you." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Walk in front of me." He went and visited him, and he offered him the position of governor of Basra, but Abu Bakrah refused and said: "How about a man from among your relatives whom the people trust?" He suggested Ibn 'Abbâs, so 'Ali appointed Ibn 'Abbâs as governor of Basra, and he appointed Ziyâd ibn Abeehi to be in charge of the land tax and the public treasury; then he ordered Ibn 'Abbâs to listen to Ziyâd.[303]

1.6.13. The attitude of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) towards those who reviled 'Â'ishah (ﷺ)

A man said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, there are two men at the door who are reviling 'Â'ishah." 'Ali ordered al-Qa'qâ' ibn 'Amr to flog each of them with one hundred lashes and to strip them of their clothes, and al-Qa'qâ' did that.[304]

1.6.14. 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir's defence of the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﷺ)

It was narrated that Muhammad ibn 'Urayb said: "A man stood up and mentioned 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) in 'Ali's presence. 'Ammâr came and said: 'Who is this man who is reviling the wife of our Prophet? Shut up, you ugly, obnoxious and blameworthy man!'"[305] According to another report, he said: "Get lost, you ugly man! Are you insulting the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?"[306] According to another report: "Mention was made of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) in the presence of 'Ali (ﷺ), and he said: 'She is the wife of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).'"[307]

1.7. Between 'Â'ishah the Mother of the Believers and Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib

'Â'ishah the Mother of the Believers (ﷺ) is aṣ-Ṣiddeeqah, the daughter of aṣ-Ṣiddeeq Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn 'Uthmân. Her mother was Umm Roomân bint 'Uwaymir al-Kinâniyyah, and she was born four or five years after the Prophet's mission began. The Prophet (ﷺ) married her when she was six years old and consummated the marriage with her when she was nine years old, in the month of Shawwâl 1 AH (or it was said in 2 AH). She was declared innocent from above the seven heavens. She was the dearest of the Prophet's

wives to him and the only virgin that he married. She was the most knowledgeable of all the women of the Ummah; all of the most prominent among the Companions would consult her if they were uncertain about any religious matter. The Prophet (ﷺ) died when she was eighteen years old, and she (ﷺ) died on the night before 17 Ramadan in 58 AH. Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) led the funeral prayer for her, and she was buried in Baqee' Cemetery — may Allah be pleased with her and make her pleased.[308] Her virtues are many and well known, and there are sound hadiths describing virtues that were unique to her among all the Mothers of the Believers, including the following:

1.7.1. The angel brought her image to the Prophet (ﷺ) on a cloth of fine silk[309] before her marriage to him

The two shaykhs, Bukhari and Muslim, narrated that 'Â'ishah said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "I was shown in my dreams for three nights that an angel brought you to me wrapped in a cloth of silk, saying, 'This is your wife.' I uncovered your face and saw that it was you, and I said: 'If this is from Allah, then He will bring it to pass.'"[310]

1.7.2. The most beloved of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ)

He stated his love for her clearly when he was asked about the dearest of people to him. Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, that the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him at the head of the army of Dhât as-Salâsil.[311] He said: "I came to him and said: 'Who among the people is dearest to you?' He (ﷺ) said: "Â'ishah.' I said: 'Who among men?' He (ﷺ) said: 'Her father.'"[312] Al-Hâfidh adh-Dhahabi said: "This is a proven report in spite of the

Râfiḍis. The Prophet (ﷺ) never loved anyone except those who were good, and he said: 'If I were to have taken a close friend (khaleel) from among this Ummah, I would have taken Abu Bakr as a close friend, but the brotherhood of Islam is better.' So he loved the best man among his Ummah and the best woman among his Ummah. Whoever hates the two who were beloved to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) deserves to be hated by Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). The Prophet's love for 'Â'ishah is well known and widely reported."[313]

1.7.3. The Prophet (ﷺ) received revelation when he was under her blanket with her, but never with his other wives

Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Hishâm ibn 'Urwah, that the people would try to take their gifts to the Prophet (ﷺ) when it was 'Â'ishah's day. 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "My co-wives went to Umm Salamah and said: 'O Umm Salamah, by Allah, the people try to bring their gifts when it is 'Â'ishah's day, and we want some of this goodness as 'Â'ishah wants it. Tell the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to instruct the people to bring their gifts to him wherever he is and wherever he goes.' Umm Salamah mentioned that to the Prophet (ﷺ), and she (later) said: 'He turned away from me. When he turned back to me, I mentioned it to him again, and he turned away from me. The third time I said it to him, he said: "O Umm Salamah, do not annoy me with regard to 'Â'ishah, for by Allah, the revelation never comes down to me when I am under the blanket of any of you except her."'"[314] Adh-Dhahabi said: "This response indicates that the superiority of 'Â'ishah to the other Mothers of the Believers was something that was divinely ordained and was not just because he loved her; rather this was one of the reasons he loved her."[315]

1.7.4. Jibreel (ﷺ) sent his greeting of salâm to her with the Prophet (ﷺ)

Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to her one day: "O 'Â'ishah, this is Jibreel sending greetings of salâm to you." She said: "And upon him be peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. You see what I cannot see," referring to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).[316]

1.7.5. The Prophet (ﷺ) went to her first when the verse instructing him to give his wives the choice was revealed

That was also accompanied by the instruction to consult her parents about the matter, because he knew that they would not tell her to leave him. She chose Allah (ﷺ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) and the home of the hereafter, and the rest of his wives followed her example. Bukhari and Muslim narrated, with their chain of narration going back to 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), that she said: "When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was commanded to give his wives the choice, he started with me, and he said: 'I am going to tell you something, but you do not have to rush until you consult your parents.' He knew that my parents would never tell me to leave him. Then he said: 'Allah, may He be glorified and praised, said: ﴿O Prophet [Muhammad]! Say to your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner [divorce]. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for Al-Muḥsinât [good-doers] amongst you an enormous reward.'﴾ *(Qur'an 33: 28-29)*' I said: 'Do I need to consult my parents about this? I desire Allah and His Messenger and the Home of the hereafter.' Then the other wives of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did the same as I had done."[317]

1.7.6. The revelation of verses of the Book of Allah because of her

These include verses that speak about her in particular and others that are for the Ummah as a whole. Those that are about her in particular, which speak of her virtue and high status, are the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) testifies that she is innocent of the accusations and slanders against her. He (ﷻ) says:

﴾Verily, those who brought forth the slander [against 'Â'ishah the wife of the Prophet] are a group among you. Consider it not a bad thing for you. Nay, it is good for you. Unto every man among them will be paid that which he had earned of the sin, and as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment.﴿ *(Qur'an 24: 11)*

﴾Bad statements are for bad people [or bad women for bad men] and bad people for bad statements [or bad men for bad women]. Good statements are for good people [or good women for good men] and good people for good statements [or good men for good women]: such [good people] are innocent of [every] bad statement which they say; for them is forgiveness, and Rizqun Karîm [generous provision, i.e. paradise].﴿ *(Qur'an 24: 26)*

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "One of her virtues is that Allah (ﷻ) declared her innocent of that which the people of the slander accused her of, and He (ﷻ) sent down concerning her innocence revelation that will be recited in the mosques (in the prayer niches that face Makkah) and prayers of the Muslims until the Day of Resurrection. He testified that she is one of the good, and He promised her forgiveness and a generous provision (referring to paradise). He (ﷻ) stated that the lies that were told about her were good for her, and that what was said about her was not bad for her and did not undermine her position; rather Allah (ﷻ) raised her in status thereby, and her

goodness and innocence became well-known among all the inhabitants of heaven and earth. What a great virtue this is! Think about this honour that stemmed from her extreme modesty and humbleness when she said: 'I thought of myself as too insignificant for Allah to speak about me in revelation that would be recited, but I was hoping that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would see a dream in which Allah would prove my innocence.'"[318]

This is the Ṣiddeeqah of this Ummah, the Mother of the Believers, the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). She knew that she was innocent and had been wronged, and that those who were accusing her were wrongdoers and fabricators. Their accusations also hurt her parents and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).[319] Ibn Katheer said: "When the people of the slander spoke against her on the basis of fabrications and lies, Allah (ﷻ) got angry and sent down, to prove her innocence, ten verses of Qur'an that will be recited until the end of time. The scholars are unanimously agreed that whoever slanders her after she has been proven innocent is a disbeliever."[320]

With regard to that which was revealed because of her but for the Ummah in general, it is the verse that permits dry-earth ablution to be performed when no pure water is available. This was a mercy and made things easy for the entire Ummah. Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), that she borrowed a necklace from Asma' and lost it, so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent some of his Companions out to look for it. The time for prayer came, and they prayed without wuḍoo'. When they came to the Prophet (ﷺ), they complained to him about that, and the verse of dry-earth ablution was revealed. Usayd ibn Huḍayr said: "May Allah reward you with good, for by Allah nothing happened to you that you dislike but Allah caused it to bring good to you and to the Muslims."[321]

1.7.7. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was ill, he wanted to be cared for in 'Â'ishah's house

He (ﷺ) died leaning on her chest, on the day of her turn. Allah (ﷻ) caused his saliva to be mixed with hers during his last moments in this world and his first moments in the hereafter, and he was buried in her house.[322] Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Â'ishah, that when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was ill, he used to go around to his wives and say: "Where will I be tomorrow?" because he looked forward to being in 'Â'ishah's house. She said: "When it was my day, he settled down there."[323] Muslim narrated that she said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to check and ask: 'Where will I be today? Where will I be tomorrow?', hoping that the turn of 'Â'ishah was close. When it was my day, Allah (ﷻ) took his soul when he was between my neck and my chest."[324]

His wives gave him permission to go wherever he wanted, and he remained in 'Â'ishah's house until he died there. 'Â'ishah said: "He died on the day that was my day, in my house. Allah took his soul when his head was between my neck and my chest, and his saliva was mixed with mine." Then she said: " 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Bakr came in, with a stick used as a natural toothbrush. The Messenger of Allah looked at it, and I said to him: 'Give me this toothbrush, O 'Abdur-Raḥmân.' He gave it to me and I cut it, then I chewed it and gave it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who brushed his teeth with it while he was leaning on my chest." Another report adds: "So Allah mixed my saliva with his on his last day in this world and his first day in the hereafter."[325]

1.7.8. He (ﷺ) told her that she was one of the people of paradise

Al-Ḥâkim narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), that she said: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, who will

be your wives in paradise?' He said: 'You will be one of them.'" She said: "I thought that the reason was that he did not marry any other virgin except me."[326] Bukhari narrated with his chain of narration going back to al-Qâsim ibn Muḥammad that when 'Â'ishah fell sick, Ibn 'Abbâs came to her and said: "O Mother of the Believers, you are going to meet those who went ahead of you, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Abu Bakr."[327] This is indicative of the great virtue of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) because he confirmed to her that she would enter paradise; he would not have said that on the basis of his own thoughts, so he must have heard it from the Prophet.[328]

1.7.9. The superiority of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) over other women is like the superiority of *thareed* [329] over other kinds of food

Bukhari and Muslim narrated, with their chain of narration going back to Abdullah ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmân, that he heard Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) say: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'The superiority of 'Â'ishah over other women is like the superiority of thareed over other kinds of food.'"[330]

An-Nawawi said: "The scholars said: it means that thareed is better than broth, and thareed with meat is better than broth without thareed, and the thareed that has no meat is better than broth. What is meant by better is that it is more nutritious, more filling, easier to digest, more enjoyable and easier to eat, a person may eat his fill of it quickly, and so on. It is better than all kinds of broth and all kinds of food. The superiority of 'Â'ishah over other women is great, as great as the superiority of thareed over other kinds of food. This does not clearly state that she is better than Maryam and Âsiyah; it could be that what is meant is that she is superior to the women of this Ummah."[331]

These are a few of the hadiths which point to the virtue, status and seniority of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) and to the high esteem in which she is held in Islam. Despite that, 'Â'ishah, the Mother of the Believers, has been subjected to slander, criticism, lies and fabrications by the Râfiḍi Shia and those who were influenced by their fabricated reports. They also discussed sound reports and sound hadiths, but they misinterpreted them and understood them in a way that differed from the actual meanings. This is what was done by the author of the book *Thumma Ihtadaytu*, who did not come up with anything new; he simply followed in the footsteps of his predecessors among the Râfiḍi Shia. He slandered the Mother of the Believers by misinterpreting the words of 'Ammâr: "By Allah, she is the wife of your Prophet in this world and in the hereafter but Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her."[332] There is nothing in these words of 'Ammâr that could be understood as undermining 'Â'ishah (ﷺ); in fact, it mentions her greatest virtue, which is that she is the wife of our Prophet (ﷺ) in this world and in the hereafter. What virtue could be greater than that?

The aim of every believer is to please Allah (ﷻ) and attain paradise, and 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) attained that, according to the testimony of 'Ammâr (ﷺ). He held a different view than hers with regard to that turmoil, but he testified that she would be in the highest degrees of paradise, in the company of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).[333] Thus the sound hadith, which can be attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ), according to what al-Ḥâkim narrated in *al-Mustadrak* from 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), says that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to her: "Would it not not please you to be my wife in this world and in the hereafter?" She said: "Yes, by Allah." He said: "You are indeed my wife in this world and in the hereafter."[334] This hadith points to one of the greatest virtues of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ). Hence Bukhari narrated the previous report from 'Ammâr under the heading of "The virtues of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ)."[335]

As for his words in the last part of the report, "...but Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her," this is not undermining the position of the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) at all, for the following reasons:

(a) 'Ammâr's words represent his own opinion; 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) held a different opinion and thought that what she was doing was right. Each of them was a noble Companion and possessed a high level of religious commitment and knowledge, so the view of one of them was not binding upon the other.[336]

(b) All that may be understood from the words of 'Ammâr is that she was going against the command of Allah in that particular case, but not everyone who takes a contrary stance is blameworthy unless proof is shown to them and they realise that they are wrong. Otherwise, they may be excused if they did not deliberately go against the command of Allah, because they may have been unaware, or their actions may have been based on misinterpretation, so they are not to be blamed for that.

(c) 'Ammâr (ﷺ) did not intend thereby to criticise or undermine 'Â'ishah; his intention was to point out her mistaken stance out of sincerity towards the Ummah. Nevertheless, he recognised her status and virtue.[337]

According to some versions of this report from 'Ammâr (ﷺ), he heard a man reviling 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), and he said: "Shut up, you ugly, hateful man! By Allah, she is the wife of your Prophet in this world and in the hereafter, but Allah is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her."[338]

The Râfiḍi Shia say that the Prophet (ﷺ) once stood up to deliver a speech, and he pointed towards 'Â'ishah's house and said:

"Here is fitnah, from where the horns of the Satan emerge." This is a slander against 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), as they claim that the Messenger (ﷺ) meant that fitnah would emerge from her house. These are misleading words, which turn the facts upside down and confuse those among the common people who have no knowledge. They explained what the narrator said, "Then he pointed (towards 'Â'ishah's house)," as meaning that he was pointing towards 'Â'ishah's house and that she would be the cause of turmoil. But the hadith does not indicate that in any way whatsoever, and this phrase cannot be interpreted as meaning that by anyone who has the slightest knowledge of what words mean. The narrator said he pointed 'towards 'Â'ishah's house'; he did not say 'at 'Â'ishah's house'. The difference between the two expressions is quite clear. The report in question was narrated by Bukhari in *Kitâb Farḍ al-Khums*[339] and was also narrated in the books of Sunnah, the two *Ṣaḥeeḥs* of Bukhari and Muslim and elsewhere, with a number of chains of narration and in more than one version. The text states the land referred to, which refutes the claim of the Râfiḍi Shia, and there is no need to refute the argument in any other way. The following are some of the versions of the hadith via many chains of narration from Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ):

It was narrated from Layth from Nâfi' from Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, when he was facing towards the east: "Verily fitnah is there, where the horn of the Satan will emerge."[340]

It was narrated that 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar said: Nâfi' narrated to me from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood at Ḥafṣah's door and pointed towards the east and said: "Fitnah will appear from where the horn of the Satan is."[341] He said it two or three times.

It was narrated from Sâlim ibn Abdullah from his father that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, while facing towards the east:

"Verily fitnah is there, verily fitnah is there, verily fitnah is there, where the horn of the Satan will appear."[342]

In these reports, the direction referred to is clearly specified; it is the east. This explains what is meant by the pointing that is referred to by the Râfiḍi Shia.[343] In some other versions of the hadith, the country referred is specified. It was narrated from Nâfi' that Ibn 'Umar said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'O Allah, bless us in our Syria; O Allah, bless us in our Yemen.' They said: 'O Messenger of Allah, and in our Najd.'[344] I think he said the third time: 'There are earthquakes and fitnah there, and in it the horn of the Satan will appear.'"[345]

It was narrated from Sâlim ibn Abdullah ibn 'Umar that he said: "O people of Iraq, how much you ask about minor sins, and how many major sins you commit! I heard my father, Abdullah ibn 'Umar, say: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'Turmoil will come from there,' and he pointed towards the east, where the horn of the Satan will appear."[346]

According to some reports, the names of some of the tribes who live in that land are mentioned, and the situation of their people is described. It was narrated that Abu Mas'ood said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) pointed with his hand towards Yemen and said: 'Faith is there, and harshness and hardheartedness are among the uncouth owners of camels, where the horns of the Satan rise, Rabee'ah and Muḍar.'"[347] This report definitively indicates that what the Prophet (ﷺ) meant when he said "fitnah is there" was the eastern lands, as the reports clearly state. In some of the reports, the people of that land are described and some tribes are mentioned by name, which clearly demonstrates the falseness of the claims made by the Râfiḍi Shia that what he was pointing at was 'Â'ishah's house. This is an invalid opinion and a worthless point of view; no one came up with this understanding or spoke of it except the Râfiḍi Shia.[348]

1.7.10. Comparative virtues of 'Â'ishah, Khadeejah and Fâṭimah (may Allah be pleased with them all)

Ibn Taymiyah said: "The best women of this Ummah are Khadeejah, 'Â'ishah and Fâṭimah, but as to which of these three is better than the others, there is some dispute."[349] Ibn Taymiyah was asked about which of the two Mothers of the Believers was better, Khadeejah or 'Â'ishah. He replied: "In terms of seniority, influence at the beginning of Islam and support of the religion, Khadeejah is superior, and neither 'Â'ishah nor any of the other Mothers of the Believers share that virtue with her. As for 'Â'ishah's influence later on, her devotion to Islam and conveying it to the Ummah and her attainment of knowledge, neither Khadeejah nor any of the others share that virtue with her, which distinguishes her from others."[350]

Ibn Ḥajar said: "It was said that there was consensus on the superiority of Fâṭimah, and that the difference of opinion remained with regard to whether 'Â'ishah or Khadeejah was more virtuous."[351] Commenting on the hadith of Abu Hurayrah about the angel Jibreel (as) coming to the Prophet (ﷺ) and telling him to convey salâm to Khadeejah from her Lord, Ibn Ḥajar said that as-Suhayli said: "Abu Bakr ibn Dâwood quoted this story as evidence that Khadeejah is superior to 'Â'ishah, because Jibreel sent greetings to 'Â'ishah from himself, but to Khadeejah he conveyed greetings from her Lord. Ibn al-'Arabi claimed that there was no disputing that Khadeejah was superior to 'Â'ishah. He narrated that this argument was an old issue, and that it was more likely that Khadeejah was superior because of this (the salâm being conveyed to her from her Lord) and because of what is mentioned above."[352]

From studying the texts that were narrated concerning the virtues of each one of them (may Allah be pleased with them), we find that they point to the superiority of Khadeejah and Fâṭimah, then 'Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all) because the Prophet

(ﷺ) said: "Khadeejah was given precedence over the women of my Ummah,"[353] and, "The best of the women of paradise are Khadeejah, Fâṭimah, Maryam and Âsiyah."[354] Ibn Ḥajar said: "This is a clear statement that cannot be interpreted in any other way."[355] The Prophet (ﷺ) also said: "The best of the women of this world are Maryam bint 'Imrân, Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid, Fâṭimah bint Muhammad and Âsiyah the wife of Pharaoh."[356] This states that Khadeejah (رضي الله عنها) is the best of the women of this Ummah. Moreover, the wording of the reports about the superiority of Fâṭimah, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O Fâṭimah, does it not please you to be the leader of the believing women or the leader of the women of this Ummah?"[357] — or, according to another version: "the leader of the women of the people of paradise"[358] — is a clear statement in which there is no ambiguity, and it cannot be interpreted in any other way. It is the statement that she is the best of the women of this Ummah and the leader of the women of the people of paradise. Fâṭimah shared with her mother in this superiority, for she and her mother are the best of the women of the people of paradise, and she and her mother are the best of the women of this Ummah. This is what the texts say.[359]

With regard to what is narrated about the superiority of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) in the hadith, "The superiority of 'Â'ishah over other women is like the superiority of thareed over all other kinds of food," this wording does not imply absolute superiority. Ibn Ḥajar[360] said: "This does not imply that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) is superior to all others, because the virtue of thareed, in comparison to other foods, is that it is easy to cook and easy to digest, and it was the best of their food at that time. None of these attributes necessarily implies superiority in every way. It may be inferior to other types of food in other ways."[361] So the hadith indicates that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) is superior to all the women of this Ummah except Khadeejah and Fâṭimah, because of the evidence to that effect, which puts a limit on 'Â'ishah's superiority.[362]

With regard to the hadith of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, in which he asked the Prophet (ﷺ): "Who among women his dearest to you?", and he (ﷺ) said 'Â'ishah.[363] Ibn Ḥibbân suggested that this was a question that was about his wives only, and he wrote this heading in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*: "Quoting a report and misinterpretation of one who does not have proper understanding of the science of hadith." Under this heading, he quoted the hadith of 'Amr as follows: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is dearest to you?' He said: "Â'ishah.' I said: 'I do not mean women; rather I mean men.' He said: 'Abu Bakr' or 'her father.'" Then Ibn Ḥibbân said: "I am going to quote the report indicating that the question was about his wives and not about women in general, such as Fâṭimah and others." He narrated, with his chain of narration from Anas, that the latter said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was asked: 'Who is the dearest of people to you?' He said: "Â'ishah.' It was said to him: 'We are not asking about your family.' He said: 'Her father.'[364] Thus it is clear that 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) comes after Khadeejah and Fâṭimah in virtue, so all the reports that indicate her superiority in general are to be understood in light of the reports about Khadeejah and Fâṭimah, which limit that superiority. No doubt 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) had many virtues, such as her knowledge, which were exclusively hers and which she did not share with Khadeejah and Fâṭimah, but the fact that a virtue is proven does not necessarily mean that she was superior in every aspect."[365]

Whatever the case, the superiority of one of them over another does not undermine the lesser one; rather this is the greatest evidence of the high status of these three women, Fâṭimah, Khadeejah and 'Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with them), as the difference of opinion is not about the fact that these women are the best of the women of this Ummah. What harm does it do to the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah if she is the third of the women of this Ummah in

virtue? Is this a call to respect and honour her, or to undermine and slander her, as the Râfiḍi Shia do?[366]

❖ Did 'Â'ishah, the Mother of the Believers (ﷺ), regard it as permissible to fight the Muslims at the Battle of the Camel?

We have seen above that she did not set out to do that, and she did not want to fight. Az-Zuhri narrated that she said after the Battle of the Camel: "I wanted my status to prevent people from fighting, and I did not think that there would be any fighting among the people. If I had known that, I would never have adopted this stance."[367] The view that 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) regarded fighting the Muslims as permissible is false and cannot stand up to the sound reports showing that 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) only went out in order to set things straight, as we have seen. In fact, this opinion stems from the reports which were fabricated by the Râfiḍi Shia, which distorted the history of early Islam and described what took place between 'Ali and Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and 'Â'ishah as civil war. Some researchers were influenced by these reports to the extent that one of them said that 'Â'ishah was taken prisoner, and they present the issue as a civil war that was previously planned for. This is a view which is to be expected from researchers who took their information concerning this matter only from fabricated reports and sources that cannot be trusted, including the books *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, *al-Aghâni*, *Murooj adh-Dhahab* and *Tareekh al-Ya'qoobi*, and even *Tareekh al-Tamaddun al-Islami* by Georgy Zaydân.[368]

❖ Can this hadith be true: "You will fight 'Ali, and you will be in the wrong"?

It is not to be found in any of the reliable books of knowledge, and it has no known chain of narrators; it is more likely to be found among the fabricated hadiths than among the sound ones. In fact, it is

a blatant lie because 'Â'ishah did not fight, and she did not go out to fight; she went out with the aim of setting things straight among the people. She did not fight, and she did not enjoin fighting. This is what has been stated by more than one of those who have knowledge of reports.[369]

❖ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) wanted to send 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) back home honoured and respected

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) prepared everything that 'Â'ishah needed of mounts, provisions and so on, and he sent with her those who had survived of the people who had come out with her, except for those who wanted to stay. He chose forty well-known women of Basra to accompany her, and he said: "Get ready, O Muḥammad (ibn al-Hanafiyyah) to take her there." On the day of her departure, 'Ali (ﷺ) came and stood. The people came, and she came out to the people; they bade farewell to her, and she bade farewell to them. She said: "O my sons, we got angry with one another because some of us thought that action should be taken more quickly. None of you should use recent events as a reason for transgressing against others. By Allah, there was nothing between me and 'Ali in the past except what there may be between a woman and her in-laws. For me, despite this misunderstanding, he is one of the best." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "O people, she has spoken the truth, and by Allah, she has been sincere. There is nothing between me and her except that (meaning that which there may be between a woman and her in-laws). She is the wife of your Prophet (ﷺ) in this world and the hereafter."

She departed on a Saturday at the beginning of the month of Rajab in 36 AH. 'Ali (ﷺ) walked with her for many miles, and he sent his sons to walk with her for a day.[370] By this noble treatment on the part of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), we see that he was following the advice of the Prophet of this Ummah (ﷺ) when he had said to him: "There is going to be some issue between you and

'Â'ishah." 'Ali (ﷺ) had asked: "Me, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Yes." 'Ali said: "Me?" He said: "Yes." 'Ali said: "Then I must be the most doomed of all, O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "No, but if that happens, send her back to her safe place."[371]

Those people were mistaken who said that 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) went out on a campaign to Basra because she had a grudge against 'Ali (ﷺ) due to his stance towards her when the hypocrites accused her of immorality during the incident of the slander. At that time, the Prophet (ﷺ) had consulted him with regard to leaving her, and 'Ali (ﷺ) had said: "O Messenger of Allah, Allah has not made things restricted for you, and there are many women other than her. If you ask the slave woman, she will tell you the truth."[372] 'Ali (ﷺ) said these words to show more care to the Prophet (ﷺ), because he saw the worries and distress that he was suffering due to what was being said. 'Ali (ﷺ) was a man of strong protective jealousy, so he thought that if the Prophet (ﷺ) separated from 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), the anxiety that he was feeling because of her would be eased until her innocence was established, at which time he could take her back. This may have been a case of choosing the lesser of two evils so as to ward off the greater.[373]

An-Nawawi said: " 'Ali thought that this was in the Prophet's best interests, because he saw how distressed he was. He tried to offer the best advice, as he wanted to put his mind at rest."[374] 'Ali (ﷺ) did not say anything bad about 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) that would give the slightest indication that he doubted her morals. Even though he said to the Prophet (ﷺ): "Allah has not made things restricted for you,"[375] he followed that by advising him: "If you ask the slave woman, she will tell you the truth."[376] He recommended that he investigate before separating from her; in other words, he retracted his first advice to separate from her and suggested that instead of that,

he could ask the slave woman and find out the truth.[377] The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked the slave woman, who was very close to 'Â'ishah, and she confirmed that she did not know anything but good about her (ﷺ). On the same day, the Messenger of Allah went out to the people to ask for support against Abdullah ibn Ubayy, saying: "O Muslims, who will support me against a man who has offended me with regard to my family? By Allah, I know nothing but good about my family."[378] Therefore 'Ali's advice was in 'Â'ishah's best interest, as the Prophet (ﷺ) became more convinced of what he already believed about his wife's innocence.[379] 'Ali's attitude concerning the slander incident was not something that made 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) angry with him or made her carry a grudge that led her to falsely accuse him of murdering 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and go out inciting huge numbers of Muslims against him, as claimed by many researchers who based their claims on the reports fabricated by the Râfiḍi Shia.

❖ Their regret for what they had done

Ibn Taymiyah said: "That was the case for all the Companions who got involved; they regretted the fighting in which they had engaged. Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, 'Ali and others all regretted it. On the day of the Camel, none of them intended to fight, but fighting broke out against their wishes."[380]

(a) It was narrated that when 'Ali (ﷺ) looked and saw that men had drawn their swords and started to fight, he said: "Would that I had died twenty years before this."[381]

(b) Na'eem ibn Ḥammâd narrated, with his chain of narration going back to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, that he said to Sulaymân ibn Ṣard: "I saw 'Ali, when the fighting grew intense, staying close to me and saying: 'O Ḥasan, would that I had died twenty years before this.'"[382]

(c) It was narrated that al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali said: "Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali wanted one thing, but matters spun out of control, and he could not do anything about it."[383]

(d) It was narrated from Sulaymân ibn Ṣard, from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, that he heard 'Ali say, when he saw the swords that the people were wielding: "O Ḥasan, would that I had died twenty or forty years before this."[384]

(e) With regard to 'Â'ishah, it was narrated that she used to say, when remembering the Battle of the Camel: "Would that I had stayed away like my co-wives. It would have been dearer to me to give birth to many children from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), all of them like 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Hishâm or Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr."[385]

(f) When she recited the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴾And stay in your houses,﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 33)* she would weep until her headcover became wet.[386]

(g) 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "Would that I had had twenty children from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), all of them like 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Hishâm, and I had been bereft of them, and that I did not do what I did on the day of the Camel."[387]

(h) Ibn Taymiyah said: "'Â'ishah did not fight, and she did not go out to fight; she went out with the aim of settings things straight among the Muslims. She thought that her going out was in the Muslims' best interests, then later on it became clear that not going out would have been better. When she remembered going out, she would weep until her headcover became wet. This is how the majority of the earliest Muslims were; they regretted the fighting in which they had become involved. Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, 'Ali and

others regretted it. On the day of the Camel, the people had no intention of fighting, but fighting broke out against their wishes."[388]

(i) Adh-Dhahabi said: "No doubt 'Â'ishah completely regretted going out to Basra and being present on the day of the Camel, and she did not think that the matter would reach the point it did."[389]

1.8. The life and martyrdom of az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm (ﷺ)

His full name was Abu Abdullah az-Zubayr ibn Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn 'Abdul-'Uzza ibn Quṣayy ibn Kilâb al-Qurashi al-Asadi.[390] He shared a common ancestor with the Prophet (ﷺ) in Quṣayy, and he was the disciple of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the son of his paternal aunt. His mother was Ṣafiyyah bint 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. He was one of the ten whom the Prophet (ﷺ) testified would be in paradise and one of the members of the consultative committee.[391] He became Muslim when he was a young man, at the age of sixteen,[392] and he was tortured because of that. It was narrated that az-Zubayr's paternal uncle used to roll him up in a mat and hang it up, then he would light a fire underneath so that the smoke would reach him. His uncle would tell him to go back to disbelief, but az-Zubayr would say: "I will never go back to disbelief."[393] He never missed any campaign that was led by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).[394]

1.8.1. The first one to unsheathe his sword for the sake of Allah (ﷻ)

It was narrated that Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab said: "The first one to unsheathe his sword for the sake of Allah was az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm. While az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm was taking a nap, he

heard someone shouting that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had been killed, so he came out of his house unsheathing and brandishing his sword. He was met head-on by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who said: 'What is the matter, O Zubayr?' He said: 'I heard that you had been killed.' The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'What were you going to do?' He said: 'By Allah, I was going to take revenge on all the people of Makkah.' The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for good for him." Sa'eed said: "I am certain that the Prophet's prayer for him will not be overlooked by Allah (ﷻ)."[395]

1.8.2. His migration to Abyssinia

When the persecution of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his Companions by Quraysh grew intense, he suggested to them that they should migrate to Abyssinia, where they could live under the care of the Negus, the just king. They stayed with him in the best land and under the best care, and they remained there safe and secure until an Abyssinian man came to fight the Negus for his kingdom. The Muslims grieved deeply; they were afraid that this new man would prevail and would not recognise the virtue and status of the pure Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). The Companions wanted to find out about the conflict that was taking place between the Negus and that man on the other side of the Nile.[396] Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said: "The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Who will go out to see the battle and bring back news?' Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm said, 'I will.' They said, 'You?', because he was the youngest of the people. They inflated a waterskin for him, and he put it under his chest; then he swam across until he reached that point of the Nile where the people had met (in battle). He continued until he reached them. Meanwhile we prayed to Allah (ﷻ) to give the Negus victory over his enemy and to establish him in his own country. By Allah, we were doing that, waiting for what might happen, when az-Zubayr came running, waving his garment and

saying: 'Be of good cheer. The Negus has prevailed, and Allah has destroyed his enemies and established him in his land.'"[397] After az-Zubayr returned from Abyssinia to Makkah, he stayed under the care of the Beloved Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), learning from him the principles, commands and prohibitions of Islam. When the Messenger of Allah migrated to Madinah, az-Zubayr was among those who migrated there.

1.8.3. At the Battle of Badr

Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) was a courageous horseman and fearless hero. He did not stay behind from any military campaign; he was present on every campaign and at every battle. He possessed extraordinary courage, rare heroism, utter sincerity and devotion to making the word of truth reign supreme.[398] Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) sacrificed a great deal for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and dedicated his life and his wealth to Allah (ﷻ), so Allah (ﷻ) honoured him and raised his status in this world and in the hereafter. It was narrated that 'Urwah said: "On the day of Badr, az-Zubayr was wearing a yellow turban, and Jibreel came down in the form of az-Zubayr."[399] What a great virtue, which cannot be rivalled by all the adornments of this world.

It was narrated that az-Zubayr said: "On the day of Badr, I met 'Ubaydah ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Âṣ, who was so heavily armed that nothing could be seen except his eyes. He was known by the kunyah Abu Dhât al-Kursh. He said: 'I am Abu Dhât al-Kursh.' I charged at him and stabbed him in the eye. I put my foot on him, then I pulled my spear out, and I had to use great force in order to pull it out, because both ends were bent. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked for the spear, and I gave it to him." When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, az-Zubayr took the spear back; then Abu Bakr (ﷺ) asked for it, and he gave it to him. When Abu Bakr died, 'Umar (ﷺ) asked for

it, and he gave it to him. When 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was killed, it remained with the family of 'Ali, (ﷺ) then Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr asked for it, and it was with him when he was killed.[400]

This report shows us the precision of az-Zubayr in hitting the target. He was able to aim his spear at the eye of Abu Dhât al-Kursh, even though that space was very narrow and his attention was divided between attacking and defending himself. Killing that man was very unlikely because he had protected his body with so much armour, but az-Zubayr managed to hit him in the eye, and that was the end of him. The wound was very deep, which is indicative of az-Zubayr's physical strength, in addition to his precision and skill in hitting the target.[401] On the day of Badr, there were two knights with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm on the cavalry of the right flank and al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad on the cavalry of the left.[402]

1.8.4. At the battle of Uḥud

Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) said: "On the day of Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned both of his parents to me." (In other words, he said: 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for you').[403] This indicates that he was skilful in fighting and strong during that battle. He (ﷺ) displayed great steadfastness, resolve and love of martyrdom for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). He described for us what Abu Dujânah al-Anṣâri did during that battle. When the two armies met and the fighting grew intense, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) began to encourage his Companions and boost their morale. He picked up a sword and said: "Who will take this from me?" They stretched out their hands, each man among them, including az-Zubayr, saying, "Me!" He said: "Who will take it and give it its due?" The people withdrew their hands, but Simâk ibn Kharashah Abu Dujânah said: "What is its due, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "That you should strike the enemy

with it until is bent." He said: "I will take it and give it its due." He gave it to him, and he was a courageous man who walked with pride in battle. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saw him walking with pride among the ranks, he said: "This is a way of walking that Allah hates except in this situation."[404]

Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm described what Abu Dujânah did on the day of Uḥud, saying: "I felt upset when I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for the sword and he withheld it from me, giving it to Abu Dujânah and not me. I decided that, by Allah, I would watch what Abu Dujânah did. I followed him, and he took out a red headband of his and wrapped it around his head. The Anṣâr said: 'Abu Dujânah has taken out the headband of death (meaning that he wants to fight to the death).' He killed every person that he engaged in combat. Among the polytheists, there was a man who would not leave any wounded person without finishing him off. The two of them began to draw close to one another, and I prayed to Allah (ﷻ) to bring them together. They met, and each dealt a blow to the other. The polytheist struck Abu Dujânah, who protected himself with his shield; the polytheist's sword got stuck in the shield, and Abu Dujânah struck him and killed him. Then I saw him holding his sword over the head of Hind bint 'Utbah, but he moved his sword away from her, and I said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.'"[405]

Ibn Isḥâq said: "Abu Dujânah said: 'I saw someone urging the people on, so I charged at him and wielded my sword at him, and he screamed. Then I realised that it was a woman, and I respected the sword of the Messenger of Allah too much to strike a woman with it.'"[406] It was narrated from Hishâm, from his father, that 'Â'ishah said: "O son of my sister, your forefathers — meaning az-Zubayr and Abu Bakr — were among ﴾Those who answered [the Call of] Allah and the Messenger [Muhammad] after being wounded﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 172).*"

When the polytheists left Uḥud, and there befell the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions what befell them, the Prophet (ﷺ) was worried lest the polytheists come back. He said: "Who will go out and follow the tracks of these people, so that they may know that we still have power?" Abu Bakr, az-Zubayr and seventy others volunteered. They went out and followed the tracks of the polytheists, who left when they heard about them. Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿So they returned with grace and bounty from Allah. No harm touched them,﴾ *(Qur'an 3: 174)* and they did not meet any enemy.[407]

When Ḥamzah ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib (ﷺ) was martyred at Uḥud, Umm az-Zubayr Ṣafiyyah bint 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib came to look at her brother. He had been mutilated by the polytheists; they had cut off his nose, opened his belly and cut off his ears and genitals. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to her son az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm: "Go and find her, and send her back, lest she see what has happened to her brother." Az-Zubayr said to her: "O my mother, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is telling you to go back." She said: "Why? We have heard that my brother has been mutilated, but that was for the sake of Allah, so we are content with what has happened, and we will seek reward and be patient inshallah." When az-Zubayr (ﷺ) came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and told him that, he said: "Let her go." So she went and looked at Ḥamzah. She offered the funeral prayer for him and said, "Verily to Allah we belong, and to Him is our return." She also prayed for forgiveness for him.[408]

According to another report from 'Urwah, he said: "My father az-Zubayr told me that when the battle of Uḥud took place, a woman came walking. When she was about to reach the place where the slain were, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not want her to see them, so he said 'The woman, the woman!'" Az-Zubayr said: "I thought she was my mother Ṣafiyyah, so I went out and rushed towards her. I caught up with her before she reached the slain, but she shoved me in the chest,

and she was a strong woman. She said, 'Get out of my way, may you perish!' I said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is insisting that you (should not see the dead).' She stopped and took out two pieces of cloth, saying: 'These are two pieces of cloth that I have brought for my brother Hamzah.' Beside him there was a man of the Anṣâr who had been killed, and the same had been done to him as had been done to Hamzah. We did not think it was right to shroud Hamzah in two pieces of cloth when the Anṣâri did not have any shroud, so we said: 'One cloth for Hamzah, and one for the Anṣâri.' We measured them, and we found that one piece was larger than the other, so we cast lots between them, and we shrouded each one in the cloth that was picked for him."[409]

1.8.5. During the Battle of the Trench: "Each Prophet has a disciple, and my disciple is az-Zubayr"

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said on the day of the Trench: "Who will bring me news of Banu Quraydhah?" Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) said: "I will." So he went on a horse and brought news of them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said that a second time, and az-Zubayr said again: "I will." The same thing happened a third time, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Each Prophet has a disciple, and my disciple is az-Zubayr."[410]

What is meant by his words "my disciple is az-Zubayr" is "the closest to me of my companions and supporters". The same Arabic word (*ḥawâri*) is used to refer to the disciples or companions of 'Eesa (ﷺ), those who were his inner circle and supporters. The helper or disciple is one who offers support and is a close companion. This hadith refers to this great virtue by which az-Zubayr (ﷺ) was distinguished. Hence when Abdullah ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) heard a man saying: "I am the son of the disciple," he said: "If you are one of the sons of az-Zubayr, that is correct; otherwise it is not."[411]

In *'Umdat al-Qâri fi Sharḥ Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhâri* by al-'Ayni, it says: "If you say: all of the Companions are supporters of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and close to him, so why is az-Zubayr singled out for this title?, we would say: He said this on the day of the Trench, when the Prophet (ﷺ) asked: 'Who will bring me news of the people?' and az-Zubayr said, 'I will.' That happened three times, and undoubtedly on that occasion he offered more support than anyone else."[412]

On the day of the Trench, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you." It was narrated that Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr said: "On the day of the Trench, 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah and I were put in charge of the women. I looked and saw az-Zubayr on his horse, going through the area of Banu Quray<u>dh</u>ah two or three times. When I went back, I said: 'O my father, I saw you going a few times.' He said: 'Did you see me, O my son?' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Who will go to Banu Quray<u>dh</u>ah and bring me news of them?", so I went out, and when I came back, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mentioned me and his parents in the same sentence, saying: "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you."'"[413] This hadith clearly indicates the virtue of az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه), because the words spoken by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), in which he expressed his appreciation for his actions and the high esteem in which he held him, are only said to a person whom one respects and for whom one would sacrifice oneself or the dearest of one's family.[414]

At the Battle of the Trench, az-Zubayr earned an immortal badge of honour which will last until the end of time: "Each prophet had a disciple, and my disciple is az-Zubayr."[415] The Prophet (ﷺ) described az-Zubayr as a disciple, which has a profound and far-reaching meaning. The one who studies this meaning will understand all the ramifications of this word disciple (*ḥawâri*), and its secrets and

depths. Those who are in greatest need of paying such attention to these meanings are the scholars, the callers to Islam and the educators. Islamic da'wah requires the preparation of helpers and disciples who will present a living example, because a practical example is more powerful and effective in spreading principles and ideas. It is an embodiment and practical implementation of those ideas that can easily be seen and followed, because true disciples follow the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) and obey his commands.[416] As it says in the hadith: "There is no prophet whom Allah sent to any nation before me who didn't have from among his nation helpers and companions who followed his way and obeyed his commands."[417]

It is the nature of things that the da'wah will go through trials and tribulations and be tested by means of both friends and enemies. The Messenger (ﷺ) was keen to guide the Muslims with regard to these variables and developments, so he said: "Then there will come after them generations who say what they do not do and do what they do not believe."[418] What is the mission of the disciple? Setting a good example of applied faith, sincerity and sacrifice are among the most prominent attributes of the disciples; thus they are a true example of the heirs of the Prophets. They strive to spread the truth and goodness, to guide the Ummah and to lead it out of its backwardness. They sacrifice everything precious for the sake of Allah, in order to bring back the vitality and radiance of Islam at a time when those with little ambition do not care about anything but their personal interests.[419]

Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm (رضي الله عنه) is a brilliant example of the embodiment of these principles. He grew up in the lap of da'wah, under the care of the Prophet (ﷺ), and received a proper education that enabled him to carry its burdens from an early age. Az-Zubayr's attitude at the Battle of the Trench shows us his character and his upbringing in the qualities of courage, support and love of the

Messenger (ﷺ). History shows us that he was a man of difficult missions, imbued with qualities of courage and bravery, so he was given the mission of finding out enemy secrets. What happened to az-Zubayr indicates that it is prescribed to divide tasks and categorize the people of da'wah according to their sincerity, spirit of sacrifice, talents and abilities.[420] Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) took part in all the campaigns of the Messenger (ﷺ) and carried out honourable exploits. At the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them), he was one of the pillars of the state during the major conquests.

1.8.6. At the Battle of Yarmook

It was narrated from 'Urwah that the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to az-Zubayr (ﷺ) on the day of Yarmook: "Why don't you charge, and we will charge with you?" He said: "If I charge, you will let me down." They said: "We will not do that." So he charged at the enemy, penetrating their ranks and passing through them, but there was no one with him. He came back, and they took hold of his reins and struck him twice on his shoulder, and one of them struck a wound that he had received on the day of Badr. 'Urwah said: "I used to put my fingers in those scars when I was small, playing with them." 'Urwah also said: "Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr was with him that day, and he was ten years old. He put him on a horse and entrusted him to a man to look after him."[421] Adh-Dhahabi said in *as-Siyar*, commenting: "This battle was al-Yamâmah, inshallah, because at that time Abdullah was ten years old."[422] Ibn Katheer said that the battle was Yarmook, but there is no reason why it could not have happened on both occasions.

Ibn Katheer said: "Among those who were present at Yarmook was az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm, who was the best of the Companions there; he was a brave and courageous knight. A number of heroes

rallied around him on that day and said: 'Why don't you attack, and we will attack with you?' He said: 'You will not be steadfast.' They said: 'Yes, we will.' So he attacked, and they attacked, but they stopped when they were met by the Byzantine ranks. He went ahead and penetrated the Byzantine ranks until he came out the other side and returned to his companions. Then they came to him again, and the same happened as had happened the first time. On that day, he received two wounds between his shoulders, and according to another report, he was injured."[423] Ibn Katheer said on another occasion: "He went out with the people to Syria as a fighter of jihad; he was present at Yarmook, and they were honoured by his presence. He performed brilliant acts of courage on that day, penetrating the Byzantine ranks twice from front to back."[424]

1.8.7. The conquest of Egypt

When 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ went to conquer Egypt, he did not have sufficient forces, so he wrote to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) asking for support and reinforcements. 'Umar was worried about the small number of 'Amr's forces, so he sent az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm with twelve thousand men. It was also said that 'Umar sent four thousand, led by the great Companions az-Zubayr, al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad, 'Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit and Maslamah ibn Makhlad. (Other narrators said that Khârijah ibn Hudhâfah was the fourth.) He wrote to 'Amr: "I have sent to you four thousand men, each thousand of whom is led by a man who is equal to a thousand." Az-Zubayr was the leader of those men.[425]

When az-Zubayr reached 'Amr, he found him besieging the fortress of Babylon. Az-Zubayr quickly mounted his horse and went around the trench surrounding the fortress, then he spread his men out around the trench. The siege lasted for seven months, then az-Zubayr was told that there was a plague inside it. He said: "We have

come to stab and plague them."[426] Conquest was slow for 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, so az-Zubayr said: "I will offer myself for the sake of Allah, hoping that Allah may grant victory thereby to the Muslims." He set up a ladder against the wall of the fortress, on the side of the marketplace of al-Ḥamâm, then he climbed up. He told them that when they heard his takbeer, they should all respond. It was not long before az-Zubayr was at the top of the fortress, shouting takbeer and wielding his sword. The people began to climb up the ladder until 'Amr told them not to, for fear that the ladder might break. When the Byzantines saw that the Arabs had captured the fortress, they withdrew. The fortress of Babylon opened its gates to the Muslims, thus ending a decisive battle in the conquest of Egypt. The rare courage of az-Zubayr was the direct cause of the Muslims' victory over Muqawqis.[427]

1.8.8. The protective jealousy of az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm (ﷺ)

It was narrated that Asma' bint Abi Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (ﷺ) said: "When I got married to az-Zubayr, he owned nothing in this world apart from a camel for carrying water and a horse. I used to feed his horse, bring water, prepare his saddle and make dough, but I was not good at baking. Some women of the Anṣâr who were my neighbours used to bake my bread for me, and they were good women. I used to bring the dates from some land which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had given to az-Zubayr, carrying them on my head. The land was two-thirds of a *farsakh* (approximately three miles) away. One day, I was coming with the dates on my head, and I met the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with a group of the Anṣâr. He called me and made his camel kneel down so that I could ride behind him. But I felt too shy to go with the men, and I remembered az-Zubayr and how jealous he was, for he was the most jealous of men. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) realised that I felt too shy, so he went on his way. I came to az-

Zubayr and told him, 'I met the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) while I was carrying the dates on my head, and there was a group of his companions with him. He made his camel kneel down so that I could ride on it, but I felt too shy, because I remembered your jealousy.' He said, 'By Allah, your having to carry the dates is harder for me than your riding with him.' Later on, Abu Bakr sent a servant who took care of the horse, and it was as if I had been set free from slavery."[428]

1.8.9. Az-Zubayr named his sons after martyred Companions

Due to of az-Zubayr's deep love of martyrdom, he named his sons after martyred Companions. Hishâm ibn 'Urwah narrated that his father said: "Az-Zubayr said: Ṭalḥah named his sons after Prophets when he learned that there would be no Prophet after Muhammad (ﷺ). But I named my children after martyrs, in the hope that they will attain martyrdom: Abdullah after Abdullah ibn Jaḥsh, al-Mundhir after al-Mundhir ibn 'Amr, 'Urwah after 'Urwah ibn Mas'ood, Ḥamzah after Ḥamzah, Ja'far after Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭâlib, Muṣ'ab after Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr, 'Ubaydah after 'Ubaydah ibn al-Ḥârith, Khâlid after Khâlid ibn Sa'eed and 'Amr after 'Amr ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Âṣ, who was killed at Yarmook."[429]

1.8.10. Az-Zubayr concealing acts of worship

Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm (رضي الله عنه) said: "If anyone can conceal any of these righteous deeds, let him do so."[430]

1.8.11. Poetry of Ḥassân ibn Thâbit in praise of az-Zubayr

Az-Zubayr passed by a gathering of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) where Ḥassân was reciting his poetry to them, but they were not listening attentively to him. Az-Zubayr sat

down with them, then he said: "Why do I see you not listening attentively to the poetry of Ibn al-Furay'ah? The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to listen attentively to him, reward him generously and not get distracted from him." Then Ḥassân spoke in verse, praising az-Zubayr in many lines in which he described his great commitment to Islam, his adherence to the way of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his sacrifice and service for Islam.[431]

1.8.12. Generosity of az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm

It was narrated that 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr said: "Seven of the Companions appointed az-Zubayr to be the guardian of their children after they died, including 'Uthmân, Ibn Mas'ood and 'Abdur-Raḥmân. He would spend on the heirs from his own wealth and protect their wealth."[432]

This is an excellent example of generosity and sincerity that embodies noble ideals that will have a strong impression on the heart of every man of dignity. A person may show generosity time after time and then tire of it, but for this generous man to be in charge of spending on the heirs of many of the Companions and protecting their wealth is a unique example in real life and an indication of the sublime attitude that the Companions attained, may Allah be pleased with them.[433]

1.8.13. The time has come to depart... and the Prophet's testimony of entering paradise

Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm (ﷺ) left the Battle of the Camel during the first round, for reasons that we have explained above. When he left the battlefield, he was repeating these lines of poetry:

Giving up on things that I fear may have bad consequences,
for the sake of Allah, is better in both worldly and religious terms.

It was also said that he spoke the following lines of verse:

I know, and I hope that I will benefit from what I know,
that life is very close to death.[434]

After he left, he was followed by 'Amr ibn Jurmooz, Faḍḍâlah ibn Ḥâbis and Nafee', along with a group of the evildoers of Banu Tameem. It was said that when they caught up with him, they ganged up on him and killed him; it was also said that the one who caught up with him was 'Amr ibn Jurmooz. 'Amr said to him: "I need something from you." He said: "Come closer." The freed slave of az-Zubayr, whose name was 'Ayṭah said: "He has a weapon!" He said: "Even so." So he came to him and started talking to him, and it was time for prayer, so az-Zubayr said to him: "Let's pray." He said: "Let's pray." Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) went forward to lead them both in prayer, and 'Amr ibn Jurmooz stabbed him and killed him. It was also said that 'Amr caught up with him while he was taking a nap in a valley that was known as Wadi as-Sibâ', and he attacked and killed him there. This is the most well-known version, and the poetry of his wife 'Âtikah bint Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl testifies to that. She was the last of his wives; before him, she was married to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, who left her a widow when he was killed. Before 'Umar, she was married to Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, who was also killed and left her a widow. When az-Zubayr was killed, she eulogised him in beautiful verse.[435]

When 'Amr ibn Jurmooz killed az-Zubayr (ﷺ), he cut off his head and brought it to 'Ali (ﷺ), thinking that this would bring him closer to him. He asked for permission to enter, and 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Give the killer of Ṣafiyyah's son (meaning az-Zubayr) the tidings of hell." Then 'Ali said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'Each prophet had a disciple, and my disciple is az-Zubayr.'"[436] When 'Ali (ﷺ) saw the sword of az-Zubayr, he said: "How often this sword defended the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and brought cheer

to him."[437] According to another report, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) refused to let Ibn Jurmooz enter upon him, and he said: "Give the killer of Ṣafiyyah's son the tidings of hell."[438] It was said that 'Amr ibn Jurmooz killed himself during 'Ali's reign; it was also said that he lived until Muṣ'ab ibn az-Zubayr became governor of Iraq. He hid from him, and it was said to Muṣ'ab: "'Amr ibn Jurmooz is here and is in hiding. Do you want to capture him?" He said: "Let him show himself, for he is safe. By Allah, I am not going to kill him in retaliation for az-Zubayr, because he is too insignificant for me to make him equal to az-Zubayr."[439]

The Prophet (ﷺ) foretold that az-Zubayr would die as a martyr. It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was once atop Mount Uḥud when the mountain shook. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Be still, for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a Ṣiddeeq and a martyr." On top of the mountain were the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them).[440] An-Nawawi said: "This hadith represents one of the miracles of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), for he foretold that these people would be martyrs, and all of them, except the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abu Bakr, died as martyrs. 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them) were all killed unlawfully and died as martyrs. The deaths of the first three are well known. Az-Zubayr was killed in Wadi as-Sibâ', near Basra, as he was leaving the battlefield, not wanting to fight. Ṭalḥah also withdrew from the battle because he did not want to fight, but an arrow struck him and killed him. It is proven that whoever is killed unlawfully is a martyr."[441] Ash-Sha'bi said: "I met five hundred or more of the Companions who said: "Ali, 'Uthmân, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr are in paradise.'" Adh-Dhahabi said: "I say: Because they are among the ten about whom it was testified that they would be in paradise; they were present at Badr; they were among the people who swore allegiance in the Pledge of Radwân; and they were

among the foremost to embrace Islam,[442] of whom Allah said that He is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. All four were killed and were granted martyrdom, so we love them and we hate the four who killed these four."[443]

1.8.14. Az-Zubayr's eagerness that his debts should be paid off when he died

It was narrated that Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr said: "On the day of the Camel, az-Zubayr left instructions that I was to pay off his debts. He said: 'If you have any difficulty in doing so, then seek help from my Master.' By Allah, I did not understand what he meant until I said: 'O my father, who is your Master?' He said: 'Allah is my Master; I never had any difficulty paying a debt but I would say, "O Master of az-Zubayr, pay it off on his behalf," and He paid it off.' The debt that he owed was that a man would come to him and give him some wealth as a trust, but az-Zubayr would say: 'No; rather it is a loan, for I fear that it may be lost.' When he was killed, he did not leave behind any dinars or dirhams, but he had a piece of land. I sold it and paid off his debts. The sons of az-Zubayr said: 'Share out our inheritance.' I said: 'By Allah, I will not share it out among you until I announce for four years during the hajj season: If anyone has a debt owed by az-Zubayr, let him come to us so that we may pay it off.'" He made this announcement every year during the hajj season, then when four years had passed, he shared it out among them. Az-Zubayr had four wives, and each wife got 1,200,000. The total sum of his wealth was 50,200,000.[444] The report of Bukhari is to be understood as referring to the total of his wealth at the time of his death, which is different from the surplus that was left four years later.[445] There was a great deal of blessing in his estate,[446] and Allah (ﷻ) blessed his land after he died; his debt was paid off, and his wealth increased a great deal. From this story we learn a number of lessons:

(a) Az-Zubayr said to his son: "O my son, if you have any difficulty in doing so (paying off the debts), then seek help from my Master." This is an example of his deeply-rooted certainty and strong faith that resulted from sincere trust in Allah (ﷻ) and turning to Him to meet his needs and relieve his distress. The true believer firmly believes that everything is in the hands of Allah (ﷻ). If he finds himself in hardship and distress, the first thing that crosses his mind is Allah (ﷻ) and how He dominates and controls everything. Those created beings who may have some connection to his situation are also in the hands of Allah (ﷻ); their hearts are in His hand, and He directs them as He wills. So the believer turns to Allah (ﷻ) before anyone else and asks Him (ﷻ) to meet his needs and relieve his distress. Then he follows the principle of cause and effect that Allah (ﷻ) has made a means of reaching the desired results, while believing that they are no more than means and that the One Who does and decrees things is Allah (ﷻ). He (ﷻ) is able to cause the means to have no impact, so that they do not lead to the usual results.[447]

(b) Was az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) a wealthy man? From the text above, we see that az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was not one of the wealthy who were known for their wealth. Instead, he felt a sense of hardship and was concerned about the trusts and debts that he owed; he was afraid that his land and property would not be sufficient to pay off all that he owed. This text also shows us that Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, like his father, was expecting that the debts would be more than the wealth and land. When his father asked him: "Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?" Abdullah could not answer him. If he was expecting anything other than what his father was expecting, he would have given him an answer to put his mind at rest at this critical moment, to tell him that the matter was different from what he thought and was expecting; however, he went along with his father in his

expectations. When az-Zubayr suggested seeking help from his Master, Abdullah asked: "Who is your Master?", expecting him to mention some individual whom he could ask for help.

No one can claim that Abdullah was not aware of his father's wealth or did not know about his property, because at that time Abdullah was thirty-five years old, and a man that old is a great help to his father and knows all about his situation and his wealth, especially if he is the oldest son. Az-Zubayr's question to his son: "Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?", indicates that Abdullah was aware of his father's situation and finances. Indeed, az-Zubayr stated that the matter of paying off the debts was not easy, as he said: "Allah is my Master; I never had any difficulty paying a debt but I would say, 'O Master of az-Zubayr, pay it off on his behalf,' and He paid it off."[448]

Another sign that az-Zubayr was not regarded as one of the rich and wealthy, and that what he expected with regard to the amount of his debts in comparison to his wealth was correct, is the fact that Ḥakeem ibn Ḥizâm (ﷺ), the paternal cousin of az-Zubayr, met Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr and said to him: "I do not think that you will be able to pay off all these debts. If you are unable to pay any of them, come to me for help."[449]

A fourth point is that Abdullah ibn Ja'far, who was owed four hundred thousand by az-Zubayr, came to Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr and said: "If you wish, I will leave it for you." Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr said: "No." Abdullah ibn Ja'far said: "Then if you wish, you may leave it and pay later than others."[450]

This is testimony that two of the senior Companions expected that the property of az-Zubayr would not be enough to pay off all the debts that he owed, and that they regarded him as one who needed help. Moreover, those two were close to az-Zubayr and

aware of his situation. One of them was Ḥakeem ibn Ḥizâm, az-Zubayr's paternal cousin; the other was his maternal cousin, because the mother of az-Zubayr was Ṣafiyyah bint 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, the paternal aunt of the Messenger (ﷺ), and he used to deal with him, giving and taking, borrowing and entrusting. These four points constitute evidence about which there is no doubt that az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was not a wealthy man.[451]

There were many rumours about the wealth of az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) and how rich he was, and there was a great deal of talk about his slaves and horses. In some sources, it says that he had a thousand slaves and that the thousand slaves used to pay him land tax every day, but that none of this wealth entered his house because he used to give it all in charity.[452] The famous Orientalist Will Durant put the figure at ten thousand, saying: "Az-Zubayr owned ten thousand slaves, and he added one thousand horses."[453] Of course, this smart Orientalist omitted the part that says that he gave the land tax of his slaves in charity.[454] This report cannot stand up to the report of Bukhari, in which it says: "When az-Zubayr was killed, he did not leave behind any dinar or dirham, but there was some land which included al-Ghâbah, eleven houses in Madinah, two houses in Basra, a house in Kufah and a house in Egypt."[455] The report is clear and states that he did not have anything except those properties, in the context of talking about the distress caused by debt and difficulties in seeking to pay it off.

If there were a thousand slaves, they would have been mentioned and their value estimated; wasn't one slave worth at least two thousand dirhams?[456] In that case, the value of the slaves alone would have covered almost the entire debt, and that is if we assume that there were only one thousand. If we go along with the wild exaggeration of Will Durant, which suggests that there

were ten thousand slaves, this would mean rejecting Bukhari's report completely, because ten thousand slaves and one thousand horses, even if their price was low, would have been enough to pay off his debts and drown his heirs in a sea of wealth. Az-Zubayr would not have needed to say to his son, "One of my greatest worries is my debt"; or to ask him, "Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?"; or to instruct him, "If you have any difficulty in doing so (paying off the debts), then seek help from my Master."[457]

Discussing the biographies of az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari and the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all) is in harmony with the aim of this book, which is to present the life and times of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه). These individuals are regarded as focal points in his life and times, and their biographies have been distorted in history books and literary works that speak of internal conflict and turmoil. It is essential to highlight their biographies, character and attitudes so that the reader will come away with correct knowledge and will not be influenced by weak reports or false stories that were fabricated by the Râfiḍi Shia historians to distort the image of these noble characters. Talking about the biography of az-Zubayr and other senior Companions who contributed to the events that took place during the lifetime of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) is in harmony with the author's aims and what he wants to convey in his study of the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

1.9. Biography and martyrdom of Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah (رضي الله عنه)

'Ubaydullah's full name was Abu Muhammad Ṭalḥah ibn Abdullah ibn 'Uthmân ibn 'Amr ibn Ka'b ibn Sa'd ibn Taym bin Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghâlib al-Qurashi at-Taymi.[458] He

shares a common ancestor with the Prophet (ﷺ) in Murrah ibn Ka'b and with Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq in Taym ibn Murrah; the number of grandfathers they share is the same.[459] His mother was aṣ-Ṣa'bah bint al-Ḥaḍrami, a woman from Yemen; she was the sister of al-'Ala' ibn al-Ḥaḍrami.[460] She became Muslim and was a Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ); she also had the honour of migrating.[461] Ṭalḥah (رضي الله عنه) was one of the ten given the glad tidings of paradise, one of the first eight people to become Muslim, one of the five people who became Muslim at the hands of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (رضي الله عنه) and one of the six members of the consultative committee.[462]

1.9.1. His conversion to Islam, persecution and migration

Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah said: "I was at the marketplace in Buṣra, when a monk in his cell said: 'Ask the people of this gathering whether there is among them any of the people of the sanctuary.' Ṭalḥah said: 'Yes, me.' He said: 'Has Aḥmad appeared yet?' I said: 'Who is Aḥmad?' He said: 'The son of Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. This is the month in which he will appear, and he is the last of the prophets. He will appear in the sanctuary and will migrate to (a place where there are) palm trees, lava fields and wet and salty land. Beware lest others believe in him before you.' I was moved by what he said, so I left quickly and came to Makkah. I asked: 'Is there any news?' They said: 'Yes, Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Ameen is claiming to be a prophet, and Ibn Abi Quḥâfah (Abu Bakr) has become his follower.' I went out and entered upon Abu Bakr and said: 'Have you become a follower of this man?' He said: 'Yes. Go to him, enter upon him and follow him, for he is calling to the truth and to goodness.'" Ṭalḥah told Abu Bakr what the monk had said, and Abu Bakr took him to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Ṭalḥah became Muslim and told the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about what the monk had said, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was happy with that.

When Abu Bakr and Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) became Muslim, Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid ibn al-'Adawiyyah took them and tied them up with one rope, and Banu Taym did not protect them. Nawfal was called 'the Lion of Quraysh'; hence Abu Bakr and Ṭalḥah were called 'the pair tied together'.[463] Ṭalḥah was persecuted for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and was severely tortured by the polytheists and by his nearest kinsmen, but he (رضي الله عنه) persisted, patiently bearing the torture and persecution until Allah (ﷻ) granted permission to migrate. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) set out to migrate to Madinah, he was met by Ṭalḥah, who was coming from Syria with a caravan. He gave the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Abu Bakr some Syrian garments, then went on to Makkah where he finished up his trade. After that, he left with the family of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and brought them to Madinah. Ṭalḥah (رضي الله عنه) was one of the earliest of those who migrated.[464] When he came to Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) established brotherhood between him and Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣâri[465] (or it was said Ka'b ibn Mâlik al-Anṣâri) when he established bonds of brotherhood between the Muhâjiroon and Anṣâr.[466]

1.9.2. At the Battle of Badr

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was expecting a caravan to come to Quraysh from Syria, so he (ﷺ) sent Ṭalḥah with Sa'eed ibn Zayd, instructing them to find out where the caravan of Quraysh was and to bring him the news. They set out and reached al-Ḥawra', where they stayed until they saw the caravan pass by and take the coastal route, then they went back to Madinah with this news. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had set out with the Muslims on the campaign of Badr, so they hastened to join the army. They did not get there in time for the battle, but the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) allocated to them a share of the booty and a reward like that of those who had fought.[467]

1.9.3. At the Battle of Uḥud

During this battle, Ṭalḥah performed a deed that made him deserve paradise. It was narrated that Jâbir said: "On the day of Uḥud, when the people fled, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was on his own in some part of the battlefield with twelve men, including Ṭalḥah, and the polytheists caught up with him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'Who will confront these people?' Ṭalḥah said: 'I will.' He told him: 'Stay where you are.' One of the Anṣâr said: 'I will,' and he fought until he was killed. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) turned and saw the polytheists and said: 'Who will confront these people?' Ṭalḥah said: 'I will.' He told him: 'Stay where you are.' One of the Anṣâr said: 'I will,' and he fought until he was killed. It continued like that until only Ṭalḥah was left with the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ). He said: 'Who will confront these people?' Ṭalḥah said: 'I will.' Ṭalḥah fought like the eleven before him, until his fingers were cut off, then he said: 'That's enough for me.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'If you had said, "In the name of Allah", the angels would have taken you up while the people were looking on.' Then Allah (ﷻ) drove back the polytheists."[468] According to Aḥmad, the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "If you had said 'In the name of Allah', you would have seen a house built for you in paradise while you were still alive in this world."[469]

It was narrated that Qays ibn Ḥâzim said: "I saw the paralysed hand of Ṭalḥah, with which he had protected the Prophet (ﷺ) on the day of Uḥud."[470] During that battle, he received thirty-nine or thirty-five wounds, and his fingers — the index finger and the one next to it — were paralysed.[471] Abu Dâwood aṭ-Ṭayâlisi narrated that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "When Abu Bakr remembered the day of Uḥud, he would say: 'That day was all for Ṭalḥah.'"[472] It was narrated that 'Â'ishah and Umm Isḥâq, the two daughters of Ṭalḥah, said: "Our father received twenty-four wounds on the day of Uḥud, among which was a square cut on his head. His sciatic nerve was damaged and his

fingers paralysed; the rest of the wounds were on his body. He fell unconscious, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) moved him backwards. Every time one of the polytheists drew near, Ṭalḥah fought to defend the Prophet (ﷺ), until his back was against the mountain."[473] The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Ṭalḥah did a deed that made paradise his due, when he did for the Messenger of Allah what he did."[474]

1.9.4. A martyr walking on the face of the earth

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was once atop the mountain of Uḥud when it began shaking. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Be still, for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a Ṣiddeeq and a martyr." On it were the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ (may Allah be pleased with them all).[475] After Ṭalḥah learned that he had been named as a martyr, that news of glad tidings from the Beloved (ﷺ), he continued seeking his martyrdom where it is usually sought. Thus he was present at every battle with the Prophet (ﷺ) except for Badr;[476] as we have seen, he missed that because he had been sent on a mission by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said concerning him: "Whoever would like to see a martyr walking on the face of the earth, let him look at Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah."[477]

1.9.5. ﴾Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah.﴿ (Qur'an 33: 23)

It was narrated from Moosa and 'Eesa, the sons of Ṭalḥah, from their father, that a Bedouin came and asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about who those "who have fulfilled their obligations"[478] were. They did not usually ask him such questions, out of respect and awe. The Bedouin asked him, and the Prophet (ﷺ) turned away from

him; he asked him again, and he turned away from him again. Ṭalḥah said: "Then I came in from the door of the mosque, and I was wearing a green garment. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saw me, he said: 'Where is the one who was asking about the one who fulfils his obligation?' The Bedouin said: 'It was me, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'This is one of those who have fulfilled their obligation.'"[479]

1.9.6. Ṭalḥah's defence of his brothers and his thinking positively of them

It was narrated that Mâlik ibn Abi 'Âmir said: "A man came to Ṭalḥah and said: 'What do you think about this Yemeni (Abu Hurayrah)? Is he more knowledgeable of the hadith of the Messenger of Allah than you? We hear things from him that we do not hear from you.' He said: 'As to whether he heard things from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that we did not hear, there is no doubt about that. I will explain to you: we were people with families, and we only came to the Messenger of Allah in the morning and in the evening. But Abu Hurayrah was a poor man with no wealth. He was the doorkeeper of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), so I do not doubt that he heard what we did not hear. Do you think that anyone who has anything good in him could fabricate things that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not say?'"[480]

1.9.7. Spending for the sake of Allah (ﷻ)

It was narrated that Qubayṣah ibn Jâbir said: "I accompanied Ṭalḥah, and I have never seen anyone who could give more generously without being asked than him."[481] It was narrated from Moosa from his father Ṭalḥah than when he received his share of wealth from Haḍramawt, seven hundred thousand, he was restless all night and said: "What punishment could a man expect from his Lord when he spent all night with this money in his house?" His wife said:

"How about some of your close friends? In the morning, call for some bowls and share it out." He said to her: "May Allah have mercy on you. You are a guided daughter of a guided one." (She was Umm Kulthoom, the daughter of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq.) The next morning, he called for some bowls and shared it out among the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, and he sent a bowl of it to 'Ali (ﷺ). Then Ṭalḥah's wife said to him: "O Abu Muhammad, don't we have a share of this wealth?" He said: "Where have you been all day? You can keep what is left." She said: "There was a bundle in which there was approximately one thousand dirhams."[482]

It was narrated that Ṭalḥah's wife Su'da bint 'Awf al-Murriyyah said: "I entered upon Ṭalḥah one day when he was looking tired. I said: 'What is the matter with you? Are you upset with your wife (meaning herself) at all?' He said: 'No, by Allah, what a good wife for a Muslim you are. I have money that is making me depressed.' I said: 'What is bothering you? Share it among your people.' He said: 'O slave, call my people for me,' and he shared it out among them. I asked the storekeeper: 'How much did he give?' He said: 'Four hundred thousand.'"[483]

It was narrated from al-Ḥasan al-Basri that Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah sold some land of his for seven hundred thousand, and he could not sleep all night because of fear of that wealth, until he distributed it the next morning.[484]

It was narrated that 'Ali ibn Zayd said: "A Bedouin came to Ṭalḥah to ask him for something, approaching him on the basis of his ties of kinship. Ṭalḥah said: 'No one asked me on the basis of ties of kinship before you. I have some land for which 'Uthmân offered me three hundred thousand; go and take it, or if you wish, I can sell it to 'Uthmân and give you the money.' He said: '(I will take) the money,' so he gave it to him. He (ﷺ) did not leave anyone among Banu Taym poor; he would give him what he needed and pay off his debts.

He used to send ten thousand every year to 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), the Mother of the Believers."[485] He was Ṭalḥah the good, Ṭalḥah who gave in abundance, Ṭalḥah the generous.[486] The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called him 'the generous' because of his generous giving and spending on good causes. Abu Abdullah al-Ḥâkim narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Moosa ibn Ṭalḥah, that on the day of Dhu Qarad,[487] Ṭalḥah slaughtered a camel and dug a well to provide them with food and water, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O Ṭalḥah the generous."[488]

1.9.8. Unique and beautiful sayings of Ṭalḥah

Among his sayings was: "The least shame for a man is his staying at home."[489] It was also narrated that he said: "Clothing shows the blessings of Allah (ﷻ), and kind treatment of a servant suppresses enemies."[490] Ṭalḥah (ﷺ) had deep insight into people's natures and qualities. He never consulted a miserly man when he wanted to uphold ties of kinship with people, and he never consulted a coward with regard to matters of war.[491]

1.9.9. Martyrdom of Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah (ﷺ)

On the day of the Battle of the Camel, after 'Ali (ﷺ) met and talked to him, Ṭalḥah (ﷺ) withdrew and stood in one of the lines. A stray arrow hit him on the knee; it was also suggested that it hit him on his neck, but the former is better known. The arrow hit the side of his horse as well as his leg, and the horse reared and nearly threw him off. He started calling: "Come to me, slaves of Allah." A freed slave of his caught up with him and rode behind him; he took him to Basra, and Ṭalḥah (ﷺ) died in a house there. It was also suggested that he died in the battle and that when 'Ali (ﷺ) walked among the slain, he saw him and began to wipe the dust from his face,[492] saying: "It is hard for me, O Abu Muhammad, to see you lying slain in these

valleys." According to this version, 'Ali (ﷺ) also said: "To Allah I complain of my sorrow and sadness;" he prayed for mercy for him and said: "Would that I had died twenty years before this."[493]

Undoubtedly Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah (ﷺ) is one of the people of paradise. At-Tirmidhi narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, that he said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Abu Bakr will be in paradise, 'Umar will be in paradise, 'Uthmân will be in paradise, 'Ali will be in paradise, Ṭalḥah and Sa'd will be in paradise, Sa'eed will be in paradise, Abu 'Ubaydah will be in paradise, az-Zubayr and 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf will be in paradise.'" Then he said: "This hadith was narrated from 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Ḥumayd from his father from Sa'eed ibn Zayd from the Prophet (ﷺ)."[494] This hadith clearly speaks of the virtue of Ṭalḥah (ﷺ), as the Prophet (ﷺ) testified that he would be one of the people of paradise. What a sublime testimony this is, for it tells of his being blessed in this world and in the hereafter.[495]

1.9.10. Allah (ﷻ) preserved his body after he died

Allah (ﷻ) preserved the body of Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah (ﷺ) after he died. His grave was opened more than thirty years later so that they could move him to another place, and no part of him had changed except for a few hairs on one side of his beard. It was narrated that al-Muthanna ibn Sa'eed said: "A man came to 'Â'ishah bint Ṭalḥah and said: 'I saw Ṭalḥah in a dream, and he said: "Tell 'Â'ishah to move me from this place, for the moisture or water is bothering me."' So she rode with her entourage, and they erected a tent over his grave and exhumed him. No part of him had changed except for a few hairs on one side of his beard, or on his head. And that was thirty-some years (after his death)."[496] May Allah be pleased with Ṭalḥah and all the Companions.

1.9.11. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ prayed against those who impugned 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them all)

It was narrated from Sa'eed ibn al-Musâyib that a man used to impugn Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). Sa'd told him to stop, saying: "Do not impugn my brothers." The man refused to stop, so Sa'd stood up and prayed two raka'ahs, then he said: "O Allah, if what he says displeases You, then show me a sign today and make an example of him." The man went out, and there was a camel driver going through crowds of people. A camel stumbled on a stone and fell on him, and he was crushed to death between the camel's chest and the ground. Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib said: "I saw the people following Sa'd and saying: 'Congratulations to you, O Abu Isḥâq, for your prayer was answered.'"[497]

2. The Battle of Ṣiffeen (37 AH)

2.1. Chain of events leading up to the battle

2.1.1. Umm Ḥabeebah bint Abi Sufyân (ﷺ) sends an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer with 'Uthmân's chemise to Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria

After 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was killed, the Mother of the Believers Umm Ḥabeebah bint Abi Sufyân (ﷺ) sent word to 'Uthmân's family, saying: "Send me the garment in which 'Uthmân was killed." They sent her his bloodstained chemise, along with pieces of hair that had been plucked from his beard. Umm Ḥabeebah called an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer and sent him to Mu'âwiyah, so he left carrying that and

her letter.[498] According to one report, an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer took with him the bloodstained chemise of 'Uthmân and the fingers of Nâ'ilah that had been cut off when she tried to defend him with her hand.[499] Nâ'ilah bint al-Farâfiṣah al-Kalbiyyah was the wife of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), from the tribe of Kalb in Syria.[500]

An-Nu'mân came to Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) in Syria; Mu'âwiyah placed him on the minbar so that the people could see him, and he hung the fingers on the sleeve of the chemise, raising it sometimes and lowering it sometimes. The people around him were weeping, urging one another to seek vengeance.[501] Shuraḥbeel ibn as-Samaṭ al-Kindi came and said to Mu'âwiyah: "'Uthmân was our caliph. If you are able to bring his murderers to justice, then do so; otherwise, resign."[502] The men of Syria swore that they would not be intimate with their wives or sleep on their beds until they killed the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and those who tried to prevent them from doing so, or they died trying.[503] This was what Mu'âwiyah wanted. The picture that an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer presented to the people of Syria was an ugly one: the murder of the caliph, swords unsheathed by the thugs and wielded over the people's necks, the public treasury plundered and the fingers of Nâ'ilah cut off. The people were deeply moved; their hearts were shaken and their eyes filled with tears. After this, it is little wonder that the people's feelings ran high and that Mu'âwiyah, and the people who were with him in Syria, insisted on bringing the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) to justice. They wanted the murderers to be handed over for retaliatory punishment before they would agree to swear allegiance. Can we imagine the caliph and leader of the Muslims being murdered by haters and conspirators who had come from outside Madinah and taken over the city, and the Muslim world not becoming outraged and sending demands from the farthest corners of the Islamic regions for the perpetrators of this heinous crime to be brought to justice?[504]

2.1.2. Mu'âwiyah's motives for not swearing allegiance

Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) had been the governor of Syria during the caliphates of 'Umar and 'Uthmân. When 'Ali (ﷺ) was appointed as caliph, he wanted to dismiss Mu'âwiyah and appoint Abdullah ibn 'Umar in his place, but Ibn 'Umar apologised and declined the post. 'Ali (ﷺ) sent Sahl ibn Ḥunayf instead, but he had hardly reached the border of Syria (Wadi al-Qura) when he was met by Mu'âwiyah's cavalry under the leadership of Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah al-Fihri, who said to him: "If you have been sent by 'Uthmân, then you are welcome, but if you have been sent by anyone else, then go back."[505] He turned around and went back.

Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria refused to swear allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ). They thought that 'Ali (ﷺ) should bring the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) to justice first, and then they would swear allegiance to him.[506] They said: "We will not swear allegiance to one who gives refuge to the murderers."[507] They feared for their lives because of the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) who were in 'Ali's army; his killers were in 'Ali's camp, and they were powerful. They thought that swearing allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ) was not obligatory for them and that if they fought him, they would be the ones who were being wronged because 'Uthmân (ﷺ) had been killed wrongfully, according to the consensus of the Muslims. They said: "If we swear allegiance, they will wrong us and transgress against us, and the blood of 'Uthmân will go unavenged."

Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) was related to 'Uthmân, and he thought that it was 'Ali's duty to stand up for 'Uthmân and bring to justice those who had killed him. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And whoever is killed wrongfully [*Mazlûman* intentionally with hostility and oppression and not by mistake], We have given his heir the authority [to demand *Qisâs*, — Law of Equality in punishment — or to forgive, or to take

Diyah (blood money)]. But let him not exceed limits in the matter of taking life [i.e. he should not kill except the killer]. Verily, he is helped [by the Islamic law].﴾ *(Qur'an 17: 33)*

Hence Mu'âwiyah brought the people together and addressed them concerning 'Uthmân's case, stating that he had been killed unlawfully at the hands of foolish hypocrites who did not respect sacred blood (referring to blood that was protected by Sharia); they had shed his blood during the sacred month in the sacred land. The people were agitated, and their voices grew loud in denouncing the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Among them were a number of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). One of them, whose name was Murrah ibn Ka'b, stood up and said: "Were it not for a hadith I heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I would not have spoken. The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned the turmoil and gave some details concerning it. Then a man passed by whose face was covered with a cloth, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This man will be following true guidance at that time.' I went up to him and found that he was 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân. I turned to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: 'This man?' He (ﷺ) said: 'Yes.'"[508]

There is another hadith that had an effect on the pursuit of justice for the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ); it motivated Mu'âwiyah and his followers and strengthened their resolve to achieve this goal. It was narrated from an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer that 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent for 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân. He came, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned to him. The last words he said, when tapping his shoulder, were: 'O 'Uthmân, Allah may clothe you with a chemise which, if the hypocrites want you to take it off, do not take it off until you meet me.' He said it three times." I [an-Nu'mân] said to her: "O Mother of the Believers, why did you not tell us this before?" She said: "I forgot it, and by Allah I did not remember it." He said: "I told Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân about it,

and he did not like what I told him. He wrote to the Mother of the Believers, asking her to write to him about it, and she wrote a letter to him about it.[509]

This great keenness to implement the ruling of Allah (ﷻ) on the murderers was the main reason for the refusal of the people of Syria, led by Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân (رضي الله عنه), to swear allegiance to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه). They thought that implementing the ruling of retaliation took precedence over swearing allegiance. It was not a matter of Mu'âwiyah's having ambitions in Syria or his demanding something that was not rightfully his; he fully understood that the issue of caliphate was limited to whoever was left of the six members of the consultative committee, and that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was superior to him and more entitled to it than he was.[510] However, allegiance had been sworn to 'Ali on the basis of the consensus of the Companions in Madinah, so Mu'âwiyah's view was contrary to what was correct.

2.1.3. Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) responds to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه)

'Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent letters to Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه), but he did not respond. This happened several times in the first few months after the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), then Mu'âwiyah sent a man to take a letter to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) in the month of Ṣafar. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said to him: "Tell me what you have for me." He said: "I have come to you from people who do not want anything but the ḥadd punishment for the murderers, and each of them is seeking vengeance. I have left behind sixty thousand men who are weeping in front of 'Uthmân's chemise, which is on the minbar of Damascus." 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "O Allah, I declare my innocence before You of the blood of 'Uthmân." As the envoy of Mu'âwiyah left 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), some of those rebels who had killed 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) tried to kill him, and he only escaped with difficulty.[511]

2.1.4. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali's preparations for the march to Syria, and al-Ḥasan's objection to that

After Mu'âwiyah's response reached Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali, the caliph decided to fight the people of Syria. He wrote to Qays ibn Sa'd in Egypt, instructing him to mobilise people to fight them, and he sent similar instructions to Abu Moosa in Kufah and to 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf. He addressed the people, urging them to join the fight, and he started to make preparations. He was determined to fight with those who obeyed him against those who disobeyed him and did not swear allegiance to him. His son al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali came to him and said: "O my father, do not do this, because it involves shedding the blood of the Muslims and creating division among them." 'Ali (ﷺ) did not accept that from him, though; he insisted on fighting. He organised the army, giving the banner to Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah and putting Ibn 'Abbâs in charge of the right flank and 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah in charge of the left. It was also said that he put 'Amr ibn Sufyân ibn 'Abdul-Asad in charge of the left flank and Abu Layla ibn 'Umar ibn al-Jarrâḥ, his nephew, in charge of the vanguard. He appointed Qutham ibn 'Abbâs to be in charge of Madinah in his absence, and there was nothing left to do except to leave Madinah and head for Syria, when something happened to distract him from that.[512] We have discussed in detail how 'Â'ishah, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr went out to Basra and the Battle of the Camel.

2.1.5. After the Battle of the Camel, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) sent Jareer ibn Abdullah to Mu'âwiyah

It is said that the period between the appointment of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) to the caliphate and the second Saba'i fitnah, which is called Basra or the Battle of the Camel, was five months and twenty-one days. Between that and his entering Kufah was one

month, and between his entering Kufah and his going out to Ṣiffeen was six months,[513] or it was said that it was two or three months.[514]

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) entered Kufah on Monday, 12 Rajab 36 AH. It was suggested to him that he should stay in the white palace, but he said: "No, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) would not like to stay there, so I dislike it too." He stayed in ar-Raḥbah and prayed two raka'ahs in the great mosque, then he addressed the people, urging them to do good and forbidding them from doing evil. He praised the people of Kufah in his speech, then he sent word to Jareer ibn Abdullah, who had been the governor of Hamadhân from the time of 'Uthmân, and al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, who had been governor of Azerbaijan from the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), telling them to accept the oath of allegiance to him from the people there, then to come to him, and they did that.

When 'Ali (ﷺ) wanted to send word to Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) calling on him to swear allegiance to him, Jareer ibn Abdullah al-Bajali said: "I will go to him, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, for there was friendship between me and him, and I will accept his oath of allegiance to you." Al-Ashtar said: "Do not send him, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, for I fear that he is inclined towards him." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Let him be," and he sent him with a letter to Mu'âwiyah. The letter told him that there was consensus among the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr on swearing allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ), informed him of what had happened at the Battle of the Camel, and called on him to join the people in swearing allegiance. When Jareer ibn Abdullah reached Mu'âwiyah and gave him the letter, Mu'âwiyah summoned 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ and the leaders of the people of Syria and consulted them. They refused to swear allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ) until the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) were executed or handed over to them. They said that if 'Ali (ﷺ) did not do that, they would not swear allegiance to him, and they would fight to the last man.

Jareer went back to 'Ali (ﷺ) and told him what they had said. Al-Ashtar said: "Did I not tell you, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, not to send Jareer? If you had sent me, Mu'âwiyah would not have opened any door but I would have closed it." Jareer said to him: "If you had gone there, they would have killed you in retaliation for 'Uthmân." Al-Ashtar said: "By Allah, if you had sent me, I would have found an answer to Mu'âwiyah's questions, and I would have given him an answer before he even asked. If Amir al-Mu'mineen had listened to me, he would have detained you and others like you until the affairs of this Ummah were straightened out." Jareer got up angrily and went to stay in Qarqaysa'. He wrote to Mu'âwiyah, telling him what he had said and what had been said to him; Mu'âwiyah wrote back, telling him to come to him.[515] Thus al-Ashtar was a factor in the alienation of the Companion Jareer ibn Abdullah, who was 'Ali's governor in Qarqaysa' and elsewhere, and the leader of his tribe Bajeelah. This Companion, Jareer ibn Abdullah al-Bajali said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never saw me without smiling at me." The Prophet (ﷺ) said concerning him: "There will enter upon you from this door a man who is the best of those who are blessed; on his face there is an angelic look."[516]

2.1.6. 'Ali's march to Syria

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) prepared to go on the campaign to Syria, and he sent word to mobilise the people.[517] He prepared a huge army; the reports differ concerning the size, but they are all weak reports[518] apart from one with a reliable chain of narration, which states that he set out with fifty thousand men.[519]

The place where the troops of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) gathered was an-Nukhaylah,[520] which was two miles from Kufah. The tribes came to it from all regions of Iraq.[521] Amir al-Mu'mineen appointed Abu Mas'ood al-Anṣâri and sent Ziyâd ibn an-Naḍr al-

Ḥârithi from an-Nukhaylah ahead of the army with eight thousand fighters, and Shurayḥ ibn Hâni' with four thousand. Then 'Ali (ﷺ) set out with his army towards Baghdad, where he was joined by more men; he appointed Sa'd ibn Mas'ood ath-Thaqafi in charge of them. From there he sent a detachment of three thousand to Mosul.[522] 'Ali (ﷺ) travelled on the main road to al-Jazeerah along the eastern bank of the Euphrates, until he drew close to Qarqaysiya'.[523] News reached him that Mu'âwiyah had set out to meet him and was camping in Ṣiffeen, so 'Ali went to ar-Raqqa,[524] from which he crossed the Euphrates, heading west, and came to Ṣiffeen.[525]

2.1.7. Mu'âwiyah's going out to Ṣiffeen

Mu'âwiyah was serious about bringing the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) to justice. He managed to ambush and kill a group of Egyptians who had invaded Madinah, including Abu 'Amr ibn Budayl al-Khuzâ'i, as they were returning to Egypt.[526] Moreover, he had supporters in Egypt and among the people of Kharbata who were also seeking vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). This group managed to defeat Muhammad ibn Abi Ḥudhayfah in a number of confrontations in 36 AH. Mu'âwiyah also managed to capture the Egyptian leaders and planners of the invasion of Madinah, such as 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Udaysi, Kinânah ibn Bishr and Muhammad ibn Ḥudhayfah, whom he detained in Palestine during the period that preceded his going out to Ṣiffeen. He executed them in Dhul-Ḥijjah 36 AH.[527] When Mu'âwiyah learned of the movements of the Iraqi army, he gathered his consultants among the prominent people of Syria and addressed them, saying: " 'Ali is coming towards you with the people of Iraq." Dhul-Kilâ' al-Ḥimyari said: "Tell us what to do, and we will do it."[528]

The people of Syria gave their pledge to Mu'âwiyah that they would fight to seek vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ).[529]

'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ) prepared the army and appointed commanders, and he stood up to address and encourage the army, saying: "The people of Iraq are divided and weak. The people of Basra are opposed to 'Ali because he killed some of them, and the strongest of the people of Kufah were killed in the Battle of the Camel. 'Ali is marching with a small group, among whom are those who killed your caliph, so do not fail in your duty to bring them to justice."[530]

Mu'âwiyah set out with a huge army. Reports differ on the number, but they all have interrupted chains of narration; they are the same reports that estimated the size of 'Ali's army. The number was put at one hundred and twenty thousand,[531] or seventy thousand, or much more than that.[532] The closest to the truth is a report that they numbered sixty thousand. Although the chain of narration of this report is interrupted, its narrator is Ṣafwân ibn 'Amr as-Saksi, a Homsi from Syria who was born in 72 AH and is proven to be trustworthy. He met a number of those who had been present at Ṣiffeen, as is clear from studying his biography.[533] The chain of narration to him is sound.[534]

The commanders of Mu'âwiyah's army were as follows: 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ in charge of the entire cavalry of Syria; aḍ-Ḍaḥḥâk ibn Qays in charge of the entire infantry; Dhul-Kilâ' al-Ḥimyari in charge of the right flank of the army; Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah in charge of the left flank; and Abu al-A'war as-Sulami in charge of the vanguard. These were the senior commanders; with each of these commanders, there were other officers, organised along tribal lines. They marched to Ṣiffeen in this order, but during the battle, some of the commanders were changed and other commanders appointed, as dictated by circumstances. This may be the reason for the differences concerning the names of the commanders in some sources.[535]

Mu'âwiyah sent Abu al-A'war as-Sulami in the vanguard of the army, and their route led northeast from Damascus. When he

reached Ṣiffeen, by the lower part of the Euphrates, he camped in a vast plain beside a branch of the Euphrates; in that place there was no other branch on the river, so he made it his own.[536]

2.1.8. The fight for the water

The army of 'Ali (ﷺ) reached Ṣiffeen, where Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) was already camping. 'Ali (ﷺ) could not find sufficient level ground for the army, so they camped in a place that was somewhat rugged, on land that was mostly covered with jagged rocks.[537] His army was caught by surprise when Mu'âwiyah prevented them from reaching the water, and some of them rushed to complain to 'Ali (ﷺ) about that. He sent al-Ash'ath ibn Qays out with two thousand men, and the first battle took place between the two sides. Al-Ash'ath was victorious and gained control of the water.[538]

(However, there is a report denying that any fighting took place at all. This report says that al-Ash'ath ibn Qays went to Mu'âwiyah and said: "I urge you by Allah, O Mu'âwiyah, to think of the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ)! Suppose you kill the people of Iraq. Who will guard the border and the women and children? Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And if two parties [or groups] among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both.﴾ *(Qur'an 49: 9)* Mu'âwiyah said: "What do you want?" They said: "Let us reach the water." He said to Abu al-A'war: "Let our brothers reach the water.")[539]

The fight for the water took place on the first day they met at the beginning of Dhul-Ḥijjah, and this was a bad start for both parties of Muslims, because fighting continued between them for the entire month. The fighting took the form of encounters between small groups. 'Ali (ﷺ) would send out a small group led by a commander, and it would engage in fighting once a day, either in the morning or the afternoon; on a few occasions they fought twice in a day. On most occasions, the commanders in 'Ali's army who would go out with

small groups to fight were al-Ashtar, Ḥajar ibn 'Adiyy, Shabath ibn Rab'i, Khâlid ibn al-Mu'tamir and Ma'qil ibn Yasâr ar-Riyâḥi. In Mu'âwiyah's army, those who went out most often were Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah, 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Khâlid ibn al-Waleed, 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, Abu al-A'war as-Sulami and Shuraḥbeel ibn as-Samaṭ. They avoided fighting with the entire army for fear of complete destruction and ruin of the Ummah, and in the hope of reaching a peace deal between the two sides whereby loss of lives and bloodshed could be avoided.[540]

2.1.9. Cooling off and attempts at reconciliation

No sooner had the month of Muḥarram begun than the two sides hastened to suspend the fighting and call for a truce, in the hope of reconciliation that would protect Muslim lives. They took advantage of this month to correspond with one another, but the information about the correspondence during this period — the month of Muḥarram — was narrated via weak but well-known chains of narration.[541] The fact that they are weak does not mean that it did not take place, though. The one who started the correspondence was Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ). He sent Basheer ibn 'Amr al-Anṣâri, Sa'eed ibn Qays al-Hamadâni and Shabath ibn Rab'i at-Tameemi to Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ), calling on him as he had before to join the main body of Muslims and swear allegiance to 'Ali. Mu'âwiyah responded in the same manner as he had previously, demanding that 'Ali hand over 'Uthmân's killers or bring them to justice before he would give him his oath of allegiance. We have already discussed 'Ali's attitude concerning this matter.[542]

The pious worshippers on both sides, of whom there was a large number, had camped in an area separate from Ṣiffeen. They tried to mediate between the two sides, but their efforts did not succeed because each group insisted on its own opinion.[543] Two of

the Companions, Abu ad-Dardâ' and Abu Umâmah, also tried to reconcile the two parties but were not able to, for the same reasons; they abandoned both parties and did not get involved in this issue of fighting.[544] Masrooq ibn al-Ajda', one of the senior Tâbi'oon, also came and exhorted them and told them to fear Allah (ﷻ), but he did not fight.[545]

Ibn Katheer criticised the lengthy details that were narrated in reports of Abu Makhnaf and Naṣr ibn Muzâḥim with regard to the correspondence between the two sides. He said: "...Then the biographers mentioned a lengthy discussion that took place between them and 'Ali. The soundness of this material is subject to further examination. In the reports, there are some words which are attributed to 'Ali in which there is criticism of Mu'âwiyah and his father; it says that they entered Islam but still had some doubts about it, and other things that undermine Mu'âwiyah. It also says that 'Ali said concerning that: 'I do not say that 'Uthmân was killed unlawfully or lawfully.' In my view, this cannot be soundly attributed to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه)."[546]

The attitude of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) concerning the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) is quite clear. I have discussed it in my book about 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (رضي الله عنه) and in the present volume.

2.2. Outbreak of fighting

Fighting resumed after the sacred months, in the month of Dhul-Ḥijjah, with encounters between battalions, groups and individuals, for fear of all-out fighting taking place. More than twenty skirmishes had taken place between the two sides during the first week of Dhul-Ḥijjah; it was also said that the number was ninety.[547] 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) announced to his army that on the next day, Wednesday, there would be an all-out battle involving the entire army; then he sent word to Mu'âwiyah informing him of that.[548] That

night, the people rushed to repair and sharpen their weapons. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ brought weapons out of storage for those whose weapons had worn out and who needed them, and he encouraged people to be steadfast in fighting.[549] Both armies spent the night planning and organising the commanders and banners.

2.2.1. The first day of the battle

On Wednesday morning, the two armies had organised their ranks in the manner followed in major battles, with a core, a right flank and a left flank.

'Ali's army was organised in the following manner:[550] 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) was in charge of the core, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs was in charge of the left flank, 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir was in charge of the infantry, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah was carrying the flag, Hishâm ibn 'Utbah (al-Marqâl) was carrying the banner and al-Ash'ath ibn Qays was in charge of the right flank.

As for the Syrian army, Mu'âwiyah was in charge of the ash-Shahba' battalion, with their helmets and shields, on a hill, and he was the commander of the army; 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ was in charge of the entire Syrian cavalry; Dhul-Kilâ' al-Ḥimyari was in charge of the right flank, which was composed of Yemeni troops; Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah al-Fihri was in charge of the left flank, which was composed of Muḍar tribesmen; and al-Makhâriq ibn aṣ-Ṣabâh al-Kilâ'i was the banner carrier.[551]

The two Muslim armies faced one another, filling the horizon with their vast numbers. Ka'b ibn Ju'ayl at-Taghlibi,[552] one of the Arab poets, said when he saw the people on Tuesday night, rushing to mend their arrows and swords in preparation for battle:

This Ummah is in a very odd situation;
power will belong tomorrow to the one who prevails.

I shall say something true, not a lie:
tomorrow prominent Arabs are going to die.[553]

Some weak reports say that 'Ali (ﷺ) addressed his troops and urged them to be patient and courageous, and to remember Allah (ﷻ) a great deal.[554] They also say that 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ inspected his troops and instructed them to straighten their ranks.[555] There is no reason not to accept these reports, because all commanders encourage and motivate their troops and pay attention to anything that may lead to victory. The two armies met in a violent conflict that remained intense until sunset, and they only stopped to offer the prayers. Each group prayed in its own camp, with the bodies of the slain in the battlefield between them. When 'Ali (ﷺ) finished praying, one of his troops asked him: "What do you say about our dead and their dead, O Amir al-Mu'mineen?" He said: "Whoever has been killed among us and them, seeking the countenance of Allah and the home of the hereafter will enter paradise."[556] The two armies stood firm, and neither prevailed; no one was seen fleeing until that day ended. In the evening, 'Ali (ﷺ) went out to the battlefield and looked at the people of Syria, and he called upon his Lord, saying: "O Allah, forgive me and them."[557]

2.2.2. The second day

On Thursday, the reports say that 'Ali (ﷺ) prayed the dawn prayer when it was still quite dark. He prepared to attack, and he changed some of his commanders. He put Abdullah ibn Budayl al-Khuzâ'i in charge of the right flank instead of al-Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindi, whom he moved to the left flank.[558] The two parties marched towards one another and engaged in fighting that was even more intense than the day before. The people of Iraq began to advance, and they started to gain the upper hand over the people of Syria. Abdullah ibn Budayl managed to penetrate Mu'âwiyah's left flank, which was

led by Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah, and he advanced towards Mu'âwiyah's battalion (ash-Shahba'), demonstrating unparalleled courage and zeal. This partial advance was accompanied by a general advance of the Iraqi army, until Mu'âwiyah thought of leaving the battlefield, but he stood firm and urged his battalion ash-Shahba' to do likewise. They managed to kill Abdullah ibn Budayl, who was replaced by Al-Ashtar as commander of the right flank.

The people of Syria stood firm, and some of them swore to fight to the death. They attacked again with firm resolve, and a number of them were killed, the most prominent of whom were Dhul-Kilâ', Ḥawshab and 'Ubaydullah ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ). Then the balance tipped in favour of the Syrian army, and they gained the upper hand, while the Iraqi army started to fall back, with many of them being killed and wounded. When 'Ali (ﷺ) saw that his army was falling back, he began calling out to them and encouraging them. He fought fiercely, aiming for the core where the Rabee'ah tribe was. They were incensed by this, and their commander Khâlid ibn al-Mu'tamir swore to fight to the death, for they were people who excelled at fighting.[559]

'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (ﷺ), who was over ninety-four years old, fought fiercely and encouraged and motivated the people to do likewise, but he was far removed from extremism. He heard a man next to him saying: "The people of Syria have become disbelievers." 'Ammâr rebuked him for saying that and said: "Rather they have transgressed against us, and we are fighting them because of their transgression. Our God is One, our Prophet is one, and our qiblah is one."[560]

When 'Ammâr (ﷺ) saw his companions falling back and his opponents advancing, he started encouraging them and telling them that they were in the right and should not be deceived by the heavy blows of the Syrians. He (ﷺ) said: "Whoever would like the *ḥoor*

'een ('firm-breasted' women with beautiful eyes, promised to male believers in paradise) to surround him, let him advance between the ranks, seeking reward with Allah, for I can see that the Syrians are fighting us so fiercely that it may create doubt in the minds of some. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if they pushed us back until they made us reach Sa'fât Ḥajar, we would still believe that we are in the right and they are in the wrong; we would still believe that our righteous people are in the right, and they are the wrong."[561] Then he began to advance with a spear in his hand, trembling because of old age. He was urging the banner carrier Hâshim ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi Waqqâṣ to advance and seek the blessings that are with Allah (ﷻ), and encouraging his companions too, saying: "Paradise is close at hand, and the ḥoor 'een are adorned. Whoever would like to be surrounded by the ḥoor 'een, let him advance between the ranks, seeking the reward of Allah (ﷻ)." This was a moving scene, for he was a great Companion who had been present at Badr. He was over ninety-four years of age and possessed great zeal, resolve, high morale and strong faith. He was an important factor in the enthusiasm of the Iraqi army and in raising their morale, which made them tougher and fiercer and willing to sacrifice until they managed to tip the balance in their favour. Hishâm ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi Waqqâṣ advanced as 'Ammâr was saying: "Advance O Hishâm, for paradise lies in the shade of the swords, and death is at the edges of the spears; the gates of heaven are open and the ḥoor 'een are adorned. Today I will meet my loved ones, Muhammad and his companions."[562]

When the sun set that Thursday, 'Ammâr asked for a drink of milk, then he said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me: 'The last drink you will drink in this world will be a drink of milk.'"[563] Then he advanced and urged the banner carrier Hishâm ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi Waqqâṣ az-Zuhri to advance with him, and neither of them came back; both were slain.[564] May Allah have mercy on them and be pleased with them.

2.2.3. The night of clamor and Friday

Fighting resumed the same night, with energy that had not been seen before. The people of Iraq fought with enthusiasm and high spirits until they pushed the people of Syria back from their positions. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) fought fiercely and pledged to fight to the death.[565] It was said that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) led his army in praying the fear prayer at the time of sunset.[566] Ash-Shâfa'i said: "It was narrated from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) that he offered the fear prayer on the night of clamor."[567]

An eyewitness said: "We fought for three days and three nights until the spears were broken and the arrows ran out, then we started using swords. We battled until the middle of the night, until we reached the point of hand to hand combat. When the swords became like sickles, we started hitting one another with pieces of iron, and we could hear nothing except the grunting and groaning of the people. Then we threw stones at one another, threw dust at one another, and bit one another with our teeth until morning came on Friday and the sun rose, although it could not be seen because of the dust of battle. The banners and flags fell, and the army was worn out; our hands were exhausted, and our throats were dry."[568]

Ibn Katheer said, describing the night of clamor and the following Friday: "They started fighting one another, and two men would fight until they were exhausted. Then they would sit down to rest, each one grunting at the other; then they would get up and fight again. To Allah we belong, and unto Him is our return. They continued like that until Friday morning came, and the people prayed the dawn prayer with gestures while still fighting, until it became very light outside, and the people of Iraq began to gain the upper hand over the people of Syria."[569]

2.2.4. The call for arbitration

After the night of clamor, the two armies found themselves in such a state that they could not withstand any more fighting. Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, the leader of Kindah, addressed his companions after the night of clamor and said: "O Muslims, you have seen what happened yesterday and how many of the Arabs were killed. By Allah, I have reached old age as Allah willed, and I have never seen anything like this. Let those who are present tell those who were absent. If we resume fighting tomorrow, that will be the end of the Arabs, and there will be no one left to protect what is sacred. By Allah, I am not saying this for fear of fighting, but I am an old man, and I fear that there will be no one to protect the women and children if we all die tomorrow. O Allah, You know that my intention is to do what is best for my people and my co-religionists, and I have not fallen short."[570]

News of that reached Mu'âwiyah, who said: "He is right, by the Lord of the Ka'bah. If we meet in battle tomorrow, the Byzantines will attack our women and children, and the Persians will attack the people of Iraq and their children. Only those with wisdom and understanding can see that." Then he said to his companions: "Tie the muṣhafs to the ends of the spears."[571] This is an Iraqi report in which there is no mention of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ or any trick or deceit; rather it was the desire of both parties. Neither Mu'âwiyah nor 'Amr would be harmed if one of them had the courage to take this initiative and save what was left of the strength of this Ummah that was fighting itself. It was only the Saba'is who were upset by that; they had started this turmoil, and they left for us a pile of misleading reports, which presented truth as falsehood and virtue — such as calling for referral to the Qur'an for judgement in order to protect Muslim life — as a crime, a conspiracy and a trick.[572]

They attributed to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) words that he did not say and that were contrary to what is mentioned in the sound reports. They attributed to him the words, "They never held it in high esteem, and they will never act upon it; they have only raised it as a trick and a plot to appease us."[573] One of the obscene things that they said about the lifting up of the muṣḥafs was: "This is the idea of the son of the promiscuous woman."[574] They also widened the circle of propaganda against 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ), to the extent that you can hardly find any book of history that does not contain words undermining 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ and claiming that he was a trickster and plotter; this is because of the fabricated reports made up by the enemies of the noble Companions and transmitted by aṭ-Ṭabari, Ibn al-Atheer and others. Many contemporary historians, such as Ḥasan Ibrâheem Ḥasan in *Tareekh al-Islam*, Muhammad al-Khuḍari Beg in *Tareekh ad-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah*, 'Abdul-Wahhâb an-Najjâr in *Tareekh al-Khulafa' ar-Râshideen* and others were fooled by them and played a role in distorting the historical facts.

The report of Abu Makhnaf suggests that 'Ali (ﷺ) rejected the idea of referring to the Qur'an for judgement when it was first suggested by the people of Syria, then he accepted it due to pressure from the worshippers who later became known as Kharijites.[575] This report suggests that 'Ali (ﷺ) slandered Mu'âwiyah and his companions, which is beneath the people of that blessed generation, so how about their leaders, foremost among whom was Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ)? It is sufficient reason to reject the report that it was narrated by the Râfiḍi fabricator Abu Makhnaf. It is a report that cannot stand up to unbiased review, and it cannot stand before other reports whose narrators cannot be accused of bias, such as that which was narrated by Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal via Ḥabeeb ibn Abi Thâbit, who said: "I came to Abu Wâ'il, one of the men of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, and he said: 'We were in Ṣiffeen, and when many of the people of

Syria were killed, 'Amr said to Mu'âwiyah: "Send the muṣḥaf to 'Ali, and call him to the Book of Allah; he will not refuse." A man brought the muṣḥaf to 'Ali and said: "Between us and you is the Book of Allah: ﴾Have you not seen those who have been given a portion of the Scripture? They are being invited to the Book of Allah to settle their dispute, then a party of them turn away, and they are averse﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 23).*" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Yes, I should be the first to accept that." The worshippers — those who rebelled later on and became known as Kharijites — stood up with their swords on their shoulders and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, shouldn't we keep on fighting these people until Allah decides the matter between us and them?" Sahl ibn Ḥunayf al-Anṣâri (ﷺ) stood up and said: "O people, you should be suspicious of your motives. We were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on the day of Ḥudaybiyah, and if we had the opportunity to fight, we were ready to fight." He was referring to the peace deal that was drawn up between the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the polytheists. Then he told them about 'Umar's objection to the treaty on the day of Ḥudaybiyah and the revelation of Soorat al-Fatḥ to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). 'Ali said: "O people, this is a victory." 'Ali accepted the offer and went back, and the people went back too.'"[576]

Sahl ibn Ḥunayf (ﷺ) expressed his annoyance with those who called for continuing the war between brothers, saying: "O people, you should be suspicious of your motives."[577] He explained to them that there was no option except dialogue and a peace deal, because the alternative was ongoing internal conflict, the consequences of which no one knew. He said: "Before this, whenever we went out to fight for a cause, we were certain of the result and how far we would go with it; we do not finish with one opponent but another opponent appears to us, and we do not know how to deal with him."[578] In these sound reports is a refutation of those who advocated fitnah and hated the Companions, who

fabricated false reports and poetry, which they then falsely attributed to the most prominent Companions and Tâbi'oon who took part in the Battle of Ṣiffeen. They tried to make them appear very eager for this war, so as to instil hatred in people's hearts; they did their utmost to perpetuate the turmoil.[579]

The call for referring to the Book of Allah for judgement without any assurance that the killers of 'Uthmân would be handed over to Mu'âwiyah, and the acceptance of this arbitration without any assurance that Mu'âwiyah would obey 'Ali and swear allegiance to him, are developments that were dictated by the consequences of Ṣiffeen. The battle had led to the killing of a large number of Muslims, and it created a common inclination towards the idea that stopping the fighting and bloodshed had become a necessity because it was important to preserve the Ummah's strength against its enemies. This was indicative of the vitality and awareness of the Ummah and its impact on decision-making.[580]

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) agreed to stop fighting at Ṣiffeen and he agreed to arbitration, which he regarded as a breakthrough; then he went back to Kufah.[581] He hoped that the arbitration would put an end to the dispute, unite the Ummah, strengthen the state and revitalise the conquest movement. A number of factors contributed to both sides reaching the idea of arbitration and accepting it:

(a) It was a final attempt to stop the conflict and bloodshed. Previous attempts, both collective and individual, had begun after the Battle of the Camel but had not succeeded. The letters that had been exchanged between the two sides, expressing the view of each, did not lead to any resolution either. The last of these attempts was that made by Mu'âwiyah during the days when fighting had intensified. He wrote to 'Ali (ﷺ), asking him to stop fighting; he said,

"I think that if you and we had known that the fighting would reach the level that it has reached, we would not have brought it upon ourselves. If we did not use our reason before, then it is not too late to refer to reason so that we may regret what has passed and put right what is left."[582]

(b) Many had been slain, and a great deal of blood had been shed. There was the fear that the Ummah might be wiped out; thus the call to stop the fighting was something that everyone was hoping for.

(c) The people were exhausted from the fighting that had gone on for so long; it was as if the call for a peace deal and reconciliation came at the right time. The majority of 'Ali's army was inclined towards making peace, and they kept saying: "War has consumed us. We think that we cannot survive unless we make a peace deal."[583] This is contrary to the worthless view alleging that raising the muṣḥafs on the spears was a trick suggested by 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ. In fact, the idea of raising the muṣḥafs was not invented by 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ; the muṣḥaf had been raised during the Battle of the Camel when its carrier Ka'b ibn Soor, the judge of Basrah, was struck by an arrow and killed.

(d) This was a response to the verse that calls for peace. Allah says: ﴿[And] if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger﴾ *(Qur'an 4: 59)*. This is supported by what 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib said when he was called to refer to the Book of Allah for judgement. He said: "Yes, I should be the first to accept that; between us and you is the Book of Allah."[584]

2.2.5. The killing of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (ﷺ) and its effect on the Muslims

The hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), in which he said to 'Ammâr (ﷺ): "You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,"[585] is a sound hadith that is proven from the Prophet (ﷺ). The killing of 'Ammâr (ﷺ) had an impact on the outcome of the Battle of Ṣiffeen. He was one of the prominent Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who had followed him wherever he went. Khuzaymah ibn Thâbit was present at Ṣiffeen, and he kept his sword sheathed. When he saw that 'Ammâr had been killed, he unsheathed his sword and fought the people of Syria, because he had heard this hadith.[586] He continued fighting until he was killed.[587]

The killing of 'Ammâr had an impact on Mu'âwiyah's camp. Abu 'Abdur-Raḥmân as-Sulami entered the camp of the Syrians and saw Mu'âwiyah, 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, 'Amr's son Abdullah ibn 'Amr and Abu al-A'war as-Sulami drinking at the water source, which was the only water source available to both sides. They were talking about the killing of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir, and Abdullah ibn 'Amr said to his father: "We have killed this man, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said concerning him: 'He will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'" 'Amr said to Mu'âwiyah: "We have killed the man of whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said what he said." Mu'âwiyah said: "Be quiet! By Allah, you are unstable. Did we kill him? Those who brought him out are the ones who killed him."[588]

Mu'âwiyah's interpretation spread like wildfire among the Syrians. It is narrated in a sound report that 'Amr ibn Ḥazm entered upon 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ and said: " 'Ammâr has been killed, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said of him: 'He will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'" 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ got up in a panic and went to Mu'âwiyah, who said to him: "What is the matter with you?" He said: " 'Ammâr has been killed." Mu'âwiyah said: "So what?" 'Amr

said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say to him: 'You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'" Mu'âwiyah said to him: "You are unstable. Did we kill him? He was killed by 'Ali and his companions; they brought him out and threw him among our spears (or our swords)."[589]

According to another sound report, two men came to Mu'âwiyah arguing over the killing of 'Ammâr, with each of them saying: "I killed him." Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ said: "Let one of you give up this claim to the other, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'He will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'" Mu'âwiyah said: "Why are you with us then?" Abdullah said: "My father complained about me to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he said: 'Obey your father as long as he is alive, and do not disobey him.' I am with you, but I am not fighting."[590]

From the above reports, we may note that the Companion with deep understanding, Abdullah ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه), was keen to speak the truth and offer sincere advice. He thought that Mu'âwiyah and his troops were the group that was in the wrong because they killed 'Ammâr, and he repeated this denunciation on different occasions. No doubt the killing of 'Ammâr (رضي الله عنه) had an effect on the Syrians because of this hadith, but Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) interpreted the hadith inappropriately. It is not right to say that those who killed 'Ammâr were those who brought him to the battlefield.[591] The killing of 'Ammâr also upset 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ; in fact, the martyrdom of 'Ammâr motivated him to try to bring an end to the battle.[592] 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) said: "Would that I had died twenty years before this day."[593]

In Bukhari, it is narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said: "We would carry one brick, and 'Ammâr would carry two bricks that time. The Prophet (ﷺ) saw him, and he wiped the dust from him and said: 'Poor 'Ammâr; he will be killed by the group that is in the wrong. He will call them to paradise, and they will call him to hell.' 'Ammâr

said: 'I seek refuge with Allah from tribulations.' "[594] Ibn 'Abdul-Barr *said: There are many reports that the Prophet* (ﷺ) *said:* " 'Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong." This is an example of the Prophet's giving news of the unseen. It is one of the signs of his prophethood, and it is one of the soundest hadiths.[595] Adh-Dhahabi said, after quoting the hadith: "This was narrated from a number of the Companions, and thus reaches the level of being mutawâtir."[596]

2.2.6. The scholars' understanding of the hadith

(a) Ibn Ḥajar said: "This hadith contains one of the signs of prophethood and reflects the clear virtue of 'Ali and 'Ammâr. It is also a refutation of the Nâṣibis who claimed that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was not in the right with regard to his wars."[597] He also said: "The hadith says, "Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,' but 'Ali was in the right in those battles, because it was the companions of Mu'âwiyah who killed him."[598]

(b) An-Nawawi said: "On the day of Ṣiffeen, the Companions followed him ('Ammâr) wherever he went, because they knew from this hadith that he would be with the group that was in the right."[599]

(c) Ibn Katheer said: " 'Ali and his companions were the closer of the two groups to the truth than the companions of Mu'âwiyah, and the companions of Mu'âwiyah were transgressing against them. It is proven in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, in the hadith of Shu'bah from Abu Salamah from Abu Naḍrah that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: 'One who is better than me — meaning Abu Qatâdah — told me that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to 'Ammâr: "You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong." ' "[600] He also said: "Here we see that 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (رضي الله عنه) was fighting alongside Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه), and he was killed by the people of Syria. This was the manifestation of

the hidden meaning of the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), who said that he would be killed by the group that was in the wrong. Thus it became clear that 'Ali (ﷺ) was in the right, and Mu'âwiyah was in the wrong. This was one of the signs of prophethood."[601]

(d) Adh-Dhahabi said: "They were a group of the believers who transgressed against Imam 'Ali (ﷺ), according to the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) to 'Ammâr: 'You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'"[602]

(e) Al-Qâḍi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi said concerning the verse, ﴾And if two parties [or groups] among the believers...﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 9)*: "This verse provides basic guidelines with regard to Muslims fighting Muslims and is the reference point with regard to fighting those who justify their transgression on the basis of misinterpretation. The Companions referred to it, and the prominent people of this Ummah also turned to it. This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) meant when he said: ' 'Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'"[603]

(f) Ibn Taymiyah said: "This is indicative of the soundness of 'Ali's caliphate — that it was obligatory to obey him, and that the one who called for obeying him was calling people to paradise and the one who called for fighting him was calling people to hell, even if he had some justification for that based on misinterpretation. It also indicates that it was not permissible to fight 'Ali (ﷺ); based on that, the one who was fighting him was wrong, even if he thought that he had a reason, or was transgressing without any justification. This is the more correct of the two views of our companions; it is the ruling that those who fought 'Ali (ﷺ) were wrong. This is also the view of the leading jurists, who based their research on that verse with regard to fighting rebels and transgressors who have their own justification."[604]

He also said: "Although 'Ali was closer to the truth than his opponents, and although 'Ammâr was killed by the group that was in the wrong, as is mentioned in the text, we have to believe everything that came from Allah (ﷻ) and submit to the truth in totality; we should not follow whims and desires or speak without knowledge. Rather we should follow the path of knowledge and justice, which means following the Qur'an and Sunnah. As for those who adhere to part of the truth and not other parts, this is the cause of division and disputes."[605]

(g) 'Abdul-'Azeez ibn Bâz said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) said in the hadith of 'Ammâr: "Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,' and he was killed by Mu'âwiyah and his companions in the Battle of Ṣiffeen. Therefore Mu'âwiyah and his companions were transgressors and were in the wrong, but their stance was based on their own reasoning, as they thought that they were doing right in seeking vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân."[606]

(h) Sa'eed Ḥawa said: "After 'Ammâr — whom the texts confirmed would be killed by the group that was in the wrong — was killed, it became clear to those who had been hesitant that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was in the right, and that fighting on his side was obligatory. Hence Ibn 'Umar expressed his regret for keeping out of it, and he felt sorry for that because he had abandoned his duty, which was to support the true leader against those who had rebelled against him without proper justification, as was stated by the jurists."[607]

2.2.7. Refuting the statement of Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) that 'Ammâr was killed by those who had brought him to the battlefield[608]

The majority of the Companions and Tâbi'oon understood from the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to 'Ammâr, "You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,"[609] that what was meant

was the army of Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ), even though Mu'âwiyah and his army may be excused for basing their decision on their own reasoning, as their aim was to do the right thing. But what they did was not the right thing, and 'Ali's group was closer to the truth than they were, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said.[610] Even though the scholars did not like Mu'âwiyah's interpretation — as we shall see below — they tried to find an excuse for him because he based his decision on his own reasoning.

With regard to the Prophet's words, "He will call them to paradise, and they will call him to hell," Ibn Ḥajar says:[611] "If it is said that he was killed at Ṣiffeen when he was with 'Ali (ﷺ), and those who killed him were on Mu'âwiyah's side, and there was a group of the Companions with Mu'âwiyah, then how can we say that that they were calling people to hell? The answer is that they thought that they were calling him to paradise, and they had their own reasoning for that, so there should be no blame on them for following what they thought best. What is meant by calling to paradise is calling to the means that lead to paradise, which is obeying the caliph. What 'Ammâr was doing was calling them to obey 'Ali (ﷺ), who was the caliph who was to be obeyed at that time. They were calling him to something other than that, but they are to be excused because they had their own reasoning that they thought was correct."[612]

Al-Qurtubi said: "Imam Abu al-Ma'âli said in *al-Irshâd*: "Ali (ﷺ) became the true Imam or leader after he was appointed to the caliphate, and those who fought him were transgressing, but thinking positively of them requires us to think that their intention was good, even though they got it wrong.'"[613] He also said: " 'Ali (ﷺ) responded to Mu'âwiyah's argument by saying: 'Then in that case, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) killed Ḥamzah when he took him out with him in the army.' What 'Ali (ﷺ) said was to draw attention to

the implications of such a statement. This was suggested by Imam al-Ḥâfidh Abu al-Khaṭṭâb ibn Diḥyah."[614]

Ibn Katheer said: "Mu'âwiyah's suggestion that 'Ammâr 'was killed by those who brought him to our swords' is a very far-fetched misinterpretation, because if that were so, then the commander of the army would be the killer of those who were killed fighting for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), as he brought them to the swords of the enemy."[615]

Ibn Taymiyah said: "I do not know of anyone who held this view among the followers of the four Imams and others among Ahl as-Sunnah, although it is the opinion of a large number of the Marwânis and those who agreed with them."[616]

Ibn al-Qayyim said, commenting on this misinterpretation: "Yes, the misinterpretation of the people of Syria is invalid, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said to 'Ammâr: 'You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'[617] They said: 'We did not kill him; rather he was killed by those who brought him and make him stand in front of our spears.' This is an invalid interpretation that is contrary to the wording and apparent meaning. The one who killed him is the one who did the action of killing him, not the one who had him on his side fighting for him."[618]

2.2.8. Who was the killer of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir?

Abu al-Ghâdiyah al-Juhani said, speaking of his killing of 'Ammâr: "On the day of Ṣiffeen, I marched to the area between the two armies, and I saw a man with his *'awrah*[619] showing. I stabbed him on his knees with a spear, and he fell. His helmet fell from his head, and I struck him on his head, then I realised that it was the head of 'Ammâr. Thus 'Ammâr was killed." The narrator said: "Abu al-Ghâdiyah asked for water, and water was brought in a glass, but he

refused to drink from it; then water was brought in an (earthenware) vessel, and he drank. A man said: 'He is too pious to drink from a glass, but he is not too pious to kill 'Ammâr!'"[620] 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ) commented on this report: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'The one who kills 'Ammâr and the one who strips the booty from him will be in hell.'"[621] Ibn Katheer said: "It is known that 'Ammâr was in 'Ali's army at the Battle of Ṣiffeen, and he was killed by the Syrian companions of Mu'âwiyah. The one who actually killed him was called Abu al-Ghâdiyah, who was an ordinary man, and it was said that he was a Companion."[622]

Ibn Ḥajar said: "Our view of the Companions who were involved in these wars is that they had their own reasons and justifications for doing so. The one who bases his action on valid reasoning but gets it wrong will have one reward, and if this is the case for ordinary people, then it is likely to be even more applicable to the Companions."[623]

Adh-Dhahabi said: "According to the Râfiḍis, Ibn Maljam (the one who killed 'Ali) will be the most wretched of creation in the hereafter. For us Sunnis, he is one of those whom we hope will be in hell, but it is possible that Allah (ﷻ) may forgive him, contrary to the view of the Kharijites and Râfiḍis. He comes under the same ruling as those who killed 'Uthmân, az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, 'Ammâr, Khârijah and al-Ḥusayn; we disavow ourselves of them and hate them for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), but we leave their cases to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted."[624]

Al-Albâni made an intelligent comment on what Ibn Ḥajar said: "This is true, but applying it to every individual involved is problematic, because this contradicts what is mentioned in the hadith under the chapter heading, 'The one who kills 'Ammâr and the one who strips the booty from him will be in hell.'[625] It is not possible to say that Abu al-Ghâdiyah, the killer of 'Ammâr, will be rewarded

because he killed him on the basis of some justification that he had in his mind, when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said that the killer of 'Ammâr would be in hell.[626] The correct view is to say that the principle is sound unless there is definitive evidence to the contrary, in which case it is an exception, as is the case here. This way of understanding the issue is better than contradicting the sound hadith."[627]

Ibn 'Abdul-Barr mentioned the biography of Abu al-Ghâdiyah al-Juhani and said: "There was a difference of opinion concerning his name. It was said that it was Yasâr ibn Sabu', or Yasâr ibn Azhar, or Muslim. He lived in Syria, in Wâsiṭ, and is regarded as Syrian. He met the Prophet (ﷺ) when he was young, and it is narrated that he said: 'I met the Prophet (ﷺ) when I was a teenager, tending my family's sheep.' He heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) the words, 'Do not return to disbelief after I am gone, striking one another's necks.' He loved 'Uthmân (ﷺ), and he is the one who killed 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir. He would describe how he killed 'Ammâr if he was asked, and he would not mind. His story is astounding to scholars."[628]

2.2.9. Noble conduct during battle

The Battle of Ṣiffeen was one of the most remarkable battles among Muslims. This conflict was so amazing that the reader cannot believe what he is reading, and he is shocked by the behaviour of people on both sides. Each of them stood in the midst of battle, with his sword unsheathed and firmly convinced of the cause for which he was fighting. It was not a battle in which people were driven by leaders who were pushing the troops into a fight of which they were not convinced. Rather it was a battle that was unique in its motives and in the way it was conducted, as well as the impact it left behind. The motives in the hearts of the participants were highlighted by some stories that have reached us in the historical sources.

They were like brothers, going together to the water source, all drinking from it and crowding one another, scooping up the water, but no man harmed another.[629] When the fighting stopped, they behaved like brothers living together. One of the participants said: "When we had a break from fighting, we would go to one another's camp and speak to one another."[630] They were members of one tribe, each with his own opinion, so people of one tribe on one side might fight bitterly with people of the same tribe on the other side,[631] each believing that he was in the right and prepared to be killed for his cause. Two men would fight until they were exhausted, then they would sit and rest and talk to one another a great deal, then they would get up and fight again.[632] They belonged to one religion, which was dearer to them than their own souls. When the time for prayer came, they would stop fighting so that they could pray.[633] When 'Ammâr (رضي الله عنه) was killed, both sides offered the funeral prayer for him.[634]

An eyewitness who took part in the Battle of Şiffeen said: "Fighting broke out at Şiffeen, and we kept fighting for days; many of us were killed until even the horses were stabbed and killed. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent word to 'Amr ibn al-'Âş telling him that the number of slain had increased, and he should stop fighting so that each side could bury its dead. He agreed, and the people mixed with one another until they were like that," and he intertwined his fingers. "One of the companions of 'Ali would charge and be killed in the camp of Mu'âwiyah, then he would be brought out from it. The companions of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) carried one of their dead before 'Amr, and when he saw him, he said: 'He strove hard and adhered strongly to the command of Allah (ﷻ).'"[635]

They would hasten to forbid evil, even in this situation. There was a group of pious people who were among the Syrian students of Abdullah ibn Mas'ood; they did not join either Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali or Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân. They said to Amir al-

Mu'mineen: "We will go out with you, but we will not join your camp. We will camp on our own until we see how things turn out between you and the people of Syria. If we see someone wanting that which is not permissible for him or transgressing, then we will be against him. 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'Welcome; this is a deep understanding of Islam and knowledge of the Sunnah. Whoever does not approve of this is a transgressor and betrayer.'"[636]

In fact, this attitude is based on conviction and views that were deeply rooted in their souls, and they fought on that basis.[637]

2.2.10. Treatment of captives

Good treatment of the captives and kindness towards them is something to be expected at Ṣiffeen, since we have discussed the noble conduct of both sides when fighting. Islam has outlined how captives are to be treated. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) encouraged kind treatment of captives and giving them the best available food. This was in the case of non-Muslims, so how about if the captives are Muslims? Undoubtedly honouring them and treating them kindly is emphasised even more.

However, a prisoner of war is regarded as a potential reinforcement for his group if he is released.[638] Hence 'Ali (ﷺ) instructed that they should be detained. If any prisoner swore allegiance to him, he was to be released; if he refused, his weapon and mount were to be confiscated or given to the one who had captured him, and he was asked to swear an oath that he would not fight. According to one report, he would give him four dirhams.[639] 'Ali's aim in doing that is quite clear; it was to weaken the rebel side. A prisoner was brought to him on the day of Ṣiffeen, and he said: "Do *not kill me in captivity.*" *'Ali (ﷺ) said: "I will not kill you in* captivity, for I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds." He let him go, then he said: "Is there any goodness in you to swear allegiance?"[640]

From these reports, it seems that the treatment of captives was as follows:

- They were honoured and treated kindly.
- They were given the option of swearing allegiance and obeying the caliph, in which case they would be released.
- If a prisoner refused to swear allegiance, his weapon would be confiscated and he would be asked to swear an oath that he would not go back to fighting; if he did so, then he would be released.
- If the prisoner insisted on fighting, then he would be kept in captivity, but he would not be killed.[641] On one occasion, fifteen prisoners were brought to 'Ali (ﷺ), and it seems that they were wounded. Those who died were washed and shrouded, and the funeral prayer was offered for them.[642] Muḥibb ad-Deen al-Khaṭeeb said, commenting on this battle: "Nevertheless, this exemplary battle was the first humane war in history, in which both sides adhered to the principles of virtue that the wise men of the West wish were implemented in their wars, even in the twenty-first century. Many of the principles of war in Islam would not have been known and written down were it not for this battle taking place, and Allah (ﷻ) has wisdom in all affairs." Ibn al-'Adeem said: "I say: All of that shows the rulings and guidelines on fighting the transgressing group (rebels). Hence Abu Ḥaneefah said: 'Were it not for 'Ali's treatment of them, no one would know how to deal with Muslims (who rebel against authority).'"[643]

2.2.11. The number of people slain

The scholars have conflicting views concerning the number of people slain at Ṣiffeen. Ibn Abi Khaythamah said that it was seventy

thousand: twenty-five thousand of the people of Iraq and forty-five thousand of the people of Syria.[644] Ibn al-Qayyim said that it was seventy thousand or more.[645] Undoubtedly these numbers are not accurate; they are wildly inflated.

The real fighting and all-out battle lasted for three days, during which the fighting was stopped at night except for the Friday evening, so the total period of fighting was approximately thirty hours.[646] No matter how violent the fighting was, it could not have been more intense than Qâdisiyyah, where the number of martyrs was 8,500.[647] Logically, it is difficult to accept the reports that mention these huge figures.

2.2.12. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali's inspection of the dead and praying for mercy for them

After the end of each round of the battle, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) would check on the dead. An eyewitness said: "I saw 'Ali on the Prophet's mule ash-Shahba', going around among the slain."[648]

While he was checking on the slain, accompanied by al-Ashtar, he passed by the body of a man who had been one of the well-known judges and worshippers in Syria. Al-Ashtar (or according to another report, 'Adiyy ibn Ḥâtim) said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, is Ḥâbis[649] with them? I thought he was a good believer and had strong faith." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "He is still a good believer today." Perhaps this man who had been killed was the judge who came to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, I had a dream that alarmed me." He said: "What was it?" He said: "I saw the sun and moon fighting, and the stars were divided between them, half and half." He said: "Which of them were you with?" He said: "With the moon against the sun." 'Umar said: "Allah says: ﴾And We have appointed the night and the day as two *Ayât* [signs etc.]. Then, We

have obliterated the sign of the night [with darkness] while We have made the sign of the day illuminating﴿ *(Qur'an 17: 12)*. Depart, for by Allah you will never do any work for me." The narrator said: "I heard that he was killed fighting for Mu'âwiyah at Ṣiffeen."[650]

'Ali (ﷺ) stood over the slain of his party and the slain of Mu'âwiyah's party and said: "May Allah forgive you, may Allah forgive you," for both parties.[651] It was narrated that Yazeed ibn al-Aṣamm said: "When the peace deal was agreed between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, 'Ali went out and walked among the slain of his party and said: 'They are in paradise.' Then he went to the slain of Mu'âwiyah's party and said: 'They are in paradise, then judgement will be passed between me and Mu'âwiyah.'"[652] He used to say of them that they were believers.[653] What 'Ali (ﷺ) said about the people who were killed at Ṣiffeen was not much different from what he said about the people who were killed at the Battle of the Camel.[654]

2.2.13. Attitude of Mu'âwiyah towards the Byzantine ruler

The ruler of Byzantium tried to take advantage of the difference of opinion that occurred between Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both) by acquiring some of the lands that were under Mu'âwiyah's control. Ibn Katheer said: "The ruler of Byzantium got his hopes up of attacking Mu'âwiyah, after Mu'âwiyah had scared and humiliated him and had defeated him and his troops. When the ruler of Byzantium saw that Mu'âwiyah was preoccupied with fighting 'Ali (ﷺ), he marched to some Muslim territory with a large number of troops, hoping to gain control of it. Mu'âwiyah wrote to him, saying: 'By Allah, if you do not give up and go back to your own country, O cursed one, I shall reconcile with my cousin against you, and I shall drive you from all

of your land and leave you no room on earth, vast as it is.' At that point, the ruler of Byzantium got scared and refrained from fighting, and he sent a message asking for a truce."[655] This is indicative of Mu'âwiyah's integrity and his love of Islam.

2.2.14. A false story about 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ at Ṣiffeen

Naṣr ibn Muzâḥim al-Kufi said: "The people of Iraq charged and engaged in fighting with the Syrians, and they fought hard. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ charged but was intercepted by 'Ali." The story goes on to say: "Then 'Ali stabbed 'Amr and threw him down, and 'Amr tried to protect himself with his legs, and his 'awrah (the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view) became uncovered. 'Ali turned his face away from him and looked away. The people said: 'The man has gotten away, O Amir al-Mu'mineen.' He said: 'Do you know who he is?' They said: 'No.' He said: 'He is 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ. He showed me his 'awrah, so I turned my face away.'"[656] This story was also mentioned by Ibn al-Kalbi, as stated by as-Suhayli in *ar-Rawḍ al-Anif.* 'Ali (ﷺ) supposedly said: "He protected himself by showing his 'awrah and reminded me of the ties of kinship." Something similar is narrated from 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ) with regard to the day of Ṣiffeen.[657]

The response to this fabrication and blatant lie is as follows: the narrator of the first report, Naṣr ibn Muzâḥim al-Kufi, the author of the book *Waq'at Ṣiffeen*, was an extreme Shia, so it comes as no surprise that he would tell lies and fabricate stories about the Companions. Adh-Dhahabi said concerning him in *al-Mizân*: "Naṣr ibn Muzâḥim al-Kufi is an extreme Râfiḍi, and they rejected him." Al-'Aqeeli said concerning him: "He is a Shia, and his hadiths contain a lot of flaws and mistakes." Abu Khaythamah said: "He was a liar."[658] Ibn Ḥajar said concerning him: "Al-'Ajli said: 'He was an

extreme Râfiḍi and is not trustworthy at all.'"[659] Hishâm ibn Muhammad ibn al-Sâ'ib al-Kalbi said: "They were agreed that he was an extreme Shia." Imam Aḥmad said: "Who narrates from him? I do not think that anyone narrates from him." Ad-Dâraquṭni said: "He is rejected."[660] Via these two Râfiḍis, this story became widely known, and the Shia historians who came after them welcomed it warmly, as did some of the Sunnis who were deceived by the lies of the Râfiḍis.[661]

This story may be regarded as an example of the lies and fabrications of the Râfiḍi Shia against the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The enemies of the Companions among the Râfiḍi historians fabricated bad qualities that they ascribed to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and they wrote them in the form of stories and poetry that could be spread easily among the Muslims, aiming to undermine the status of the righteous Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Sunni Muslims were not paying attention; they started at a late stage to examine and verify the reports of Islamic history, after those poems and stories had spread everywhere and become widely known among the storytellers. By then, many of them had unfortunately come to be accepted, even among Sunni historians.[662]

2.2.15. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) visits a graveyard on his way back from Şiffeen

After Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) had finished at Şiffeen, he passed by a graveyard and said: "Peace be upon you, people of the desolate and isolated abode, believing men and women, Muslim men and women. You have gone before us, and we are following in your footsteps and will join you soon. O Allah, forgive us and them, and bestow Your mercy on us and them. Praise be to Allah Who has made the earth a receptacle for the living and the dead. Praise be to

Allah Who has created you, and on it He will gather you, and from it He will raise you. Glad tidings to the one who remembers the Resurrection, prepares himself for the Reckoning and is content with the little that he has been given."[663]

2.2.16. Insistence of 'Uthmân's murderers that the battle should continue

The murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) were very keen that the battle between the two sides should continue until the people were wiped out and the strength of both sides was lessened, so that they would be safe from retaliation and punishment. They panicked when they saw the people of Syria raising up the muṣḥafs and 'Ali (ﷺ) responding to their request by ordering that the fighting and bloodshed be stopped. They tried to make 'Ali change his mind, but the battle stopped; as a result, they felt helpless and had no alternative but to rebel against 'Ali (ﷺ). So they fabricated the idea that the ruling belongs to Allah (and not to people), and they kept away from both sides.

What is strange is that the historians did not pay as much attention to what these people did at this stage as they did with regard to the Battle of the Camel, even though they were present in 'Ali's army, or to the reason why these negotiations that went on for many months failed, or the role that the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) may have played in the Battle of Ṣiffeen to cause the failure of all attempts at reconciliation between the two sides — because reconciliation between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah would have been like reaching a deal to bring them to justice and execute them. It does not make sense to suggest that they strove hard during the Battle of the Camel to make the fighting continue, but did not do the same thing at Ṣiffeen.[664]

2.2.17. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) forbids impugning Mu'âwiyah and cursing the people of Syria

It was narrated that when 'Ali (ﷺ) heard that two of his companions were openly reviling Mu'âwiyah and cursing the people of Syria, he sent word to them telling them to stop what they were doing. They came to him and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, are we not in the right and they in the wrong?" He said: "Yes indeed, by the Lord of the Ka'bah." They said: "Then why are you stopping us from reviling and cursing them?" He said: "I do not want you to be people who curse; rather you should say: 'O Allah, protect our blood and theirs, reconcile between us and them. Save them from their misguidance, so that truth will become clear to those who are unaware of it and those who got carried away in misguidance will give up their stubborn ways.'"[665]

With regard to what is said about 'Ali cursing Mu'âwiyah and his companions in his supplications during the prayer, and Mu'âwiyah cursing 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbâs, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn when he said supplications during the prayer, this is not true, because the Companions were more eager than others to adhere to the commands of the Lawgiver, which forbid reviling or cursing a Muslim.[666] It was narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Whoever curses a believer, it is as if he killed him."[667] He (ﷺ) also said: "The believer is not given to slandering and cursing."[668] And he (ﷺ) said: "Those who are given to cursing cannot be intercessors or witnesses on the Day of Resurrection."[669] Moreover, the report in which it is narrated that Amir al-Mu'mineen cursed Mu'âwiyah and his companions in his supplications, and that Mu'âwiyah cursed Amir al-Mu'mineen, Ibn 'Abbâs, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, is not proven in terms of its chain of transmission. It includes Abu Makhnaf Looṭ ibn Yaḥya, the extreme Râfiḍi, so these reports are not to be trusted. Furthermore, in

the soundest books of the Shia, there is a prohibition on reviling the Companions, and 'Ali (ﷺ) denounced those who reviled Mu'âwiyah and the people with him, saying: "I do not want you to be people who revile others; if you describe their actions and attitudes, that is better to say and is more helpful in leaving no excuse for them. Instead of reviling them, you can say: 'O Allah, protect our blood and theirs from being shed and reconcile between us and them.'"[670] This reviling and denouncing them as disbelievers was not part of 'Ali's practice, according to the soundest Shia books.[671]

3. Arbitration

Both sides agreed to refer to arbitration after the end of the battle of Ṣiffeen. Each side was to appoint a man as an arbitrator to represent it, then the two arbitrators were to reach an agreement that was in the best interests of the Muslims. Mu'âwiyah appointed 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, and 'Ali appointed Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (may Allah be pleased with them all), and a document was written concerning that. The place where the two arbitrators were to meet was Doomat al-Jandal, in the month of Ramadan 37 AH. Some of 'Ali's army thought that this action was a sin that implied disbelief and that he should repent to Allah; they rebelled against him and became known as the Kharijites (rebels). 'Ali (ﷺ) sent Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) to debate with them, and then 'Ali (ﷺ) himself debated with them. A group of them rejoined him, but others refused, and there were battles between them and 'Ali (ﷺ), which weakened and exhausted his forces. They kept causing trouble until they assassinated him; we will discuss this in detail below.

The issue of arbitration is regarded as one of the most serious issues in the history of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Many writers lost their way when discussing it and wrote about it in a confused manner

in their books. They relied on weak and fabricated reports that distorted the image of the noble Companions, especially Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari. He was described as a feebleminded and weak character who was easily deceived with words, and as a man who was so heedless that he was tricked by 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ with regard to the matter of arbitration. They described 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ) as a crafty and deceitful man. These writers, who had ulterior motives and a grudge against Islam, tried to ascribe to these two great men many blameworthy characteristics, even though these were the two men whom the Muslims chose to make a decision regarding a serious dispute that had led to the killing of many Muslims. Many historians, writers and researchers treated these reports, which were fabricated by the opponents of the Companions, as if they were historical facts. People accepted them without examining them, as if they were sound and as if there was no doubt concerning them. It may be because of the exciting, narrative style in which they were written, or because the claims of trickery and deceit made people interested in it and made the historians keen to write it down. We are speaking about the details of what happened, not the issue of arbitration itself, because there is no doubt that it took place.[672]

I decided to begin this discussion with a look at the biography of the two great Companions, Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari and 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (may Allah be pleased with them both).

3.1. Biography of Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari

His full name was Abdullah ibn Qays ibn Haḍḍâr ibn Ḥarb. He was the great leader and Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari at-Tameemi, the prominent scholar and reciter of Qur'an.[673] Abu Moosa became Muslim during the early days in Makkah. Ibn Sa'd said: "He came to Makkah and formed an alliance with Sa'eed ibn al-'Âṣ. He became Muslim early on and migrated to

Abyssinia."[674] Some reports say that he went back to his people to call them to Allah. Ibn Ḥajar reconciled the reports about his becoming Muslim, saying: "There is some confusion about the reports that said that Abu Moosa migrated to Abyssinia, because what is mentioned in the sound report is that Abu Moosa left his land with a group of people, heading towards the Prophet (ﷺ) in Khaybar. It is possible to reconcile these reports by noting that Abu Moosa migrated first to Makkah, where he became Muslim, and the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him with those whom he sent to Abyssinia. Abu Moosa went to his people's land, which was opposite Abyssinia on the eastern side. When he realised that the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions had settled in Madinah, he headed for Madinah, along with those of his people who had become Muslim, but the ship that was carrying them ended up in Abyssinia because the wind blew it off course. That is possible and thus the reports may be reconciled and should be adopted."[675]

3.1.1. The badge of honour that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) pinned to the chest of Abu Moosa

3.1.1.a. "You migrated twice: your migration to Abyssinia and your migration to me"

It was narrated that Abu Moosa said: "We set out from Yemen with more than fifty of my people. We were three brothers: myself, Abu Ruhm and Abu 'Âmir. But our ship took us to Abyssinia, where Ja'far and his companions were, and we came when Khaybar was conquered. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'You migrated twice: your migration to Abyssinia and your migration to me.'"[676]

It was also narrated that Anas said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Tomorrow people will come to you whose hearts are more receptive to Islam than yours.' The Ash'aris came, and when they drew close they began to recite poetry: 'Tomorrow we will meet all

our loved ones, Muhammad and his party.' When they arrived, they shook hands; they were the first ones to start the tradition of shaking hands."[677]

3.1.1.b. "They are your people, O Abu Moosa"

It was narrated that 'Iyâd al-Ash'ari said: "When the verse, ﴿Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him﴾ *(Qur'an 5: 54)* was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'They are your people, O Abu Moosa,' and he pointed to him."[678]

3.1.1.c. "O Allah, forgive Abdullah ibn Qays for his sins, and admit him to a gate of great honour on the Day of Resurrection"

It was narrated that Abu Moosa said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) had finished with Ḥunayn, he sent Abu 'Âmir al-Ash'ari at the head of an army to Awṭâs, where he met Durayd ibn as-Sammah. Durayd was killed, and Allah caused his companions to be defeated. Abu 'Âmir was struck in the knee with an arrow, and it was stuck in his knee. I came to him and said: 'O uncle, who struck you?' Abu 'Âmir pointed him out, and I went and caught up with him, but he ran away when he saw me. I started saying: 'Don't you feel ashamed? Aren't you an Arab? Won't you stand firm?' So he stopped, and we met and traded blows; then I killed him. I went back to Abu 'Âmir and said: 'Allah has killed your opponent.' He said: 'Pull this arrow out.' I pulled it out, and water came out of the wound. He said: 'O son of my brother, go to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and convey greetings of salâm to him from me, and say to him: "Abu 'Âmir says to you: 'Pray for forgiveness for me.'"' Abu 'Âmir appointed me in charge of the people, and it was not long before he died. When we returned, I told the Prophet (ﷺ) what had happened. He made wuḍoo', then he raised his hands until I could see the whiteness of his armpits, and he said: 'O Allah, forgive Abu 'Âmir'. Then he said: 'O Allah, on the Day of

Resurrection make him above many of Your creation.' I said: 'And me, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'O Allah, forgive Abdullah ibn Qays for his sins, and admit him to a gate of great honour[679] on the Day of Resurrection.'"[680]

3.1.1.d. "This one has rejected glad tidings; you two should accept it"

It was narrated that Abu Moosa said: "I was with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in al-Ji'rânah[681] when a Bedouin came and said: 'Will you fulfil your promise to me, O Muhammad?' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: 'Be of good cheer.' The Bedouin said to him: 'How often you say to me, "Be of good cheer."' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned to Bilâl and me, saying: 'This one has rejected glad tidings; you two should accept it.' They said: 'We accept it, O Messenger of Allah.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called for a vessel of water. He washed his hands and face in it and rinsed his mouth, then he said: 'Drink from it and pour some on your heads and chests.' We did that, and Umm Salamah called out to us from behind the curtain: 'Leave some of that which is in your vessel for your mother.' So we left some of it for her."[682]

3.1.1.e. "He has been given a beautiful voice like that of Dâwood"

It was narrated from Abdullah ibn Buraydah that his father said: "I came out of the mosque one night and saw the Prophet (ﷺ) standing at the door of the mosque, and a man was praying. He said to me: 'O Buraydah, do you think he is showing off?' I said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said: 'Rather he is a devoted believer. He has been given a beautiful voice like that of Dâwood.' I went to him and saw that he was Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, and I told him."[683]

3.1.1.f. "O Abdullah ibn Qays, shall I not tell you of one of the treasures of paradise?"

It was narrated that Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari said: "We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) on a journey, and the people were climbing a hill. Every time a man reached the top of a hill, he would say: '*Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh wa Allâhu Akbar* (There is none worthy of worship other than Allah and Allah is the Greatest)' — and I think he said it at the top of his voice. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was on his mule, climbing up the mountain. He said: 'O people, you are not calling upon One Who is deaf or absent.' Then he said: 'O Abdullah ibn Qays — or O Abu Moosa — shall I not tell you of one of the treasures of paradise?' I said: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Say: *Lâ ḥawla wa lâ quwwata illâ Billâh* (There is no might and no power except with Allah).'"[684]

3.1.1.g. "Be easygoing, and do not be harsh. Give glad tidings, and do not put people off"

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed Abu Moosa in charge of Zubayd and 'Aden.[685] It was narrated from Abu Moosa that when the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him to Yemen with Mu'âdh, he advised them: "Be easygoing, and do not be harsh. Give glad tidings, and do not put people off." Abu Moosa said to him: "In our land, there is a drink called *at-tabagh* that is made from honey, and there is another drink called *al-mizr* that is made from barley." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Every intoxicant is ḥarâm." Then both of them went on their way, and later Mu'âdh asked Abu Moosa: "How do you recite the Qur'an?" Abu Moosa replied: "I recite it in my prayer and when riding my mount, standing and sitting, a little at a time." Mu'âdh said: "I sleep then I get up, so I hope for reward from Allah when I sleep as I seek reward from Him for my night prayer."[686]

3.1.2. The status of Abu Moosa (ﷺ) in the view of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ)

Abu Moosa was one of the pillars of the Muslim state at the time of 'Umar (ﷺ). He was a commander of the army during the conquest of Qum[687] and Qâthân and at the Battle of Tastar.[688] He was also one of the founders of the Basri school at the time of 'Umar (ﷺ); he went to Basra and taught there.[689] He was regarded as one of the most knowledgeable of the Companions. He was influenced by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ), and there was correspondence between them; this is mentioned in the discussion of the institutions of governors and judges.

Abu Moosa (ﷺ) was famous for his knowledge, worship, piety, modesty, dignity, lack of interest in worldly gains and steadfastness in adhering to Islam. He is regarded as one of the senior scholars, jurists and muftis among the Companions. He was mentioned by adh-Dhahabi in *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffadh* as being at the highest level of the Companions. He was knowledgeable and acted upon his knowledge. He was a righteous man who constantly recited the Book of Allah, and he had the most beautiful voice when reciting Qur'an. He was the most knowledgeable of the people of Basra in Qur'an and in deep understanding of Islam, and he conveyed that excellent and blessed knowledge.

He spent a great deal of time with the Prophet (ﷺ), and he learned from senior Companions such as 'Umar, 'Ali, Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with them all). Abu Moosa was influenced in particular by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, who gave him a great deal of advice and sent letters to him during his lengthy governorship of Basra. Abu Moosa used to refer to 'Umar (ﷺ) concerning all cases that came to him, to the extent that ash-Shu'bi regarded him as one of the leading and most famous judges of the Ummah. He said: "The judges of the Ummah are

'Umar, 'Ali, Zayd ibn Thâbit and Abu Moosa."[690] When Abu Moosa came to Madinah, he was keen to attend 'Umar's gatherings and sometimes spent a long time with him. It was narrated from Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar that Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه) came to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb after the evening prayer, and 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said to him: "What brings you here?" He said: "I have come to talk to you." He said: "At this hour?" He said: "It is to discuss a matter of knowledge." So 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) sat down, and they talked for a long time, then Abu Moosa said: "The prayer, O Amir al-Mu'mineen." 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: "We are in a state of prayer."[691]

Just as Abu Moosa was keen to seek knowledge, he was also enthusiastic about spreading that knowledge and teaching people. In his sermons, he would teach the people and encourage them to learn. It was narrated that Abu al-Muhallab said: "I heard Abu Moosa on his minbar saying: 'Whoever is granted knowledge by Allah, let him teach it, but he should not speak of that of which he has no knowledge, lest he become one of those who make things up and thus go beyond the pale of Islam.'"[692]

Abu Moosa made the mosque of Basra a centre for his academic activity, and he allocated a large portion of his time to academic gatherings. He did not stop there, though; he did not let any opportunity pass without making the most of it to teach and educate the people. After he said the salâm at the end of the prayer, he would turn to face the people, teaching them and checking on their recitation of the noble Qur'an. Ibn Shawdhab said: "When Abu Moosa had prayed the dawn prayer, he would turn to face the rows of people and ask them to recite, one by one."[693] Abu Moosa was well known among the Companions for his beautiful voice and recitation. The people would gather around him when they heard him reading. When Abu Moosa sat with him, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) would ask him to recite for him whatever he could of Qur'an.[694]

Allah (ﷻ) enabled him to teach the Muslims, and he did all he could to teach Qur'an and spread it among the people in every land he stayed in. The people would gather around him to hear his beautiful voice and recitation. Seekers of knowledge crowded around him in the mosque of Basra, and he divided them into groups arranged in circles. He would go around reciting to them, listening to them and correcting their recitation.[695] The noble Qur'an was his main preoccupation; he devoted most of his time to it, whether or not he was not travelling. It was narrated that Anas ibn Mâlik said: "Al-Ash'ari sent me to 'Umar (ﷺ), and 'Umar said: 'How was al-Ash'ari when you left him?' I said: 'I left him teaching people the Qur'an.' He said: 'He is wise and smart,[696] but do not tell him (that I said that).'"[697]

Even when he went out for jihad, he would teach and educate others. It was narrated that Ḥaṭṭâb ibn Abdullah ar-Riqâshi said: "We were with Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (ﷺ) in an army on the banks of the Tigris when the time of prayer came, so his caller gave the call for the noon prayer. The people went to perform wuḍoo', and he made wuḍoo'. He led them in prayer, and then they sat in a circle. When the time came for the afternoon prayer, his caller gave the call for that prayer, and the people got up to do wuḍoo' again. His caller said: 'No wuḍoo' is required except for the one who broke his wuḍoo'.'"

His academic efforts bore fruit, and he had the joy of seeing large numbers of people around him who had memorised the noble Qur'an and had become scholars. In Basra alone, their number was more than three hundred. When 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) asked his employees to send him the names of those who had memorised the Qur'an, so that he could honour them and increase their stipends, Abu Moosa wrote to him, telling him that the number of people with him who had learned the Qur'an by heart was three hundred plus.[698]

Abu Moosa (ﷺ) also paid attention to teaching and narrating the Sunnah. A number of Companions and senior Tâbi'oon narrated from him. Adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Buraydah ibn al-Ḥuṣayb, Abu Umâmah al-Bâhili, Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, Anas ibn Mâlik, Ṭâriq ibn Shihâb, Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, al-Aswad ibn Yazeed, Abu Wâ'il Shaqeeq ibn Salamah, Abu 'Uthmân an-Nahdi and others narrated from him."[699] He (ﷺ) adhered strongly to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ); this is indicated by his conduct during his life and by what he instructed his children to do after he died. Despite his great enthusiasm for the Sunnah, he did not narrate a large number of hadiths, and this was true of the senior Companions; they were very cautious in narrating from the Prophet (ﷺ).

One of the people who was close to Abu Moosa in Basra was Anas ibn Mâlik, who is regarded as one of his inner circle. It was narrated from Thâbit that Anas said: "We were with Abu Moosa on a journey, and the people were talking and mentioning worldly matters. Abu Moosa said: 'O Anas, these people are talking too much. Come, let us remember our Lord for a while.' Then he said: 'What slowed the people down (in pursuing matters of the hereafter)?' I said: 'Worldly matters, Satan and whims and desires.' He said: 'No, it is the fact that this world is close, and they can see it, while the hereafter is hidden from them. By Allah, if they could see it with their own eyes, they would not drift or turn away from it.'"[700]

Since Abu Moosa trusted Anas, he appointed him to be his envoy to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Umar (ﷺ). Anas said: "Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari sent me from Basra to 'Umar, who asked me about the people's situation." After the battle of Tastar, Abu Moosa sent him to 'Umar with the prisoners and booty, and he took its Persian commander Hormozan to 'Umar.[701]

3.1.3. Governorship of Abu Moosa at the time of 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them)

Abu Moosa is rightfully regarded as the most famous of the governors of Basra during the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ). During the time of Abu Moosa, many places in Persia were conquered; he used to go out for jihad himself, and he would send the commanders in different directions from Basra. The period of his governorship was filled with jihad, and the people of Basra managed to conquer a number of important places, including al-Ahwâz and its environs. Abu Moosa cooperated with neighbouring governors in many wars and conquests. He put a great deal of effort into organising the conquered regions, appointing governors over them, securing them and organising their affairs.

There was a great deal of correspondence between Abu Moosa and 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) concerning different issues, and 'Umar gave him valuable advice about how he should deal with the people when he received them in his councils, and about fearing Allah (ﷻ) and trying to help the people. 'Umar (ﷺ) said: "The most blessed of people is the one whose subjects are blessed because of him, and the most wretched of people is the one whose subjects are wretched because of him. Beware of indulging in the people's wealth, lest the people working for you also indulge; then your example would be like that of the animal that looks at the green land and starts grazing in order to grow fat, but its death will be caused by its fatness."[702] There are a number of letters between 'Umar and Abu Moosa relating to various administrative and executive issues that Abu Moosa was taking care of with the help of instructions from 'Umar. Most of this correspondence has been compiled by Muhammad Ḥameedullah in his valuable book on political documents.[703]

The period of Abu Moosa's governorship in Basra is regarded as one of its best periods, to the extent that one of the descendants of the people of Basra, namely al-Ḥasan al-Basri (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "No rider ever came and brought more blessing to its people than Abu Moosa."[704] That was because Abu Moosa (ﷺ), in addition to being a governor, was the best teacher of its people, as he taught them the Qur'an and various matters of religion.[705]

A number of cities in Persia were conquered during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ). They were put under the administration of Basra and run by its governor, who appointed workers to be in charge of them; these employees were under his authority and reported to him directly. Thus Abu Moosa is regarded as one of the greatest governors of 'Umar (ﷺ), and the correspondence between 'Umar and Abu Moosa is regarded as one of the most important sources for shedding light on Umar's conduct with his governors and explaining the way he dealt with them.[706] 'Umar (ﷺ), in his instructions to the caliphs who would come after him, recommended that no governor whom he had appointed should be left in his post for more than a year except for Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, whom he said should be left in his post for four years.[707]

Abu Moosa (ﷺ) was also appointed as the judge during the time of 'Umar (ﷺ), and 'Umar wrote him a letter about judiciary matters. The guidance in this letter may benefit any judge, or indeed any administrator, in any time or place.[708] Ibn al-Qayyim said concerning it: "This is an important letter, which the scholars welcomed and used as a basis for rulings on passing judgement and giving testimony. Muftis are in urgent need of studying it and learning what is in it."[709]

Abu Moosa was also appointed as a governor at the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), who asked him to be the judge in Basra. When

'Uthmân (ﷺ) was killed, Abu Moosa was the governor of Kufah, and when 'Ali (ﷺ) was appointed as caliph, Abu Moosa accepted the oath of allegiance for him from the people of Kufah, because he had been its governor for 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ﷺ).

When 'Ali (ﷺ) was in Dhu Qâr and urged the people of Kufah to lend him their support, Abu Moosa saw the beginning of fitnah and division among the Muslims. He advised the people of Kufah to stay in their houses and keep away from this issue, because it was fitnah in which one who was sitting would be better than one who was standing, and one who was standing would be better than one who was walking. Because of his difference of opinion with the caliph, he was dismissed from his position as governor of Kufah.[710]

From the time he became a Muslim, Abu Moosa (ﷺ) spent his life spreading Islam and teaching knowledge to the people, especially the Qur'an, as he was famous for his recitation; taking part in jihad for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and encouraging others to do so; judging disputes between people; spreading justice; and running the affairs of the province by means of the judiciary and administration. There is no doubt that these tasks are difficult and require unique skills and characteristics of knowledge, understanding, quick wit, cleverness, piety and asceticism. Abu Moosa had an abundant share of these characteristics. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and then the four Rightly Guided Caliphs after him, relied on Abu Moosa.[711] Can it be imagined that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then the caliphs who succeeded him, relied on a man who could be tricked in such a way as is narrated in the story of arbitration?[712]

The fact that Abu Moosa (ﷺ) was chosen by 'Ali (ﷺ) and his companions to be an arbitrator on behalf of the people of Iraq is in complete harmony with the sequence of events, because the next stage was to be the stage of reconciliation and uniting the Muslims. Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari was one of those who had called for

reconciliation and peace; at the same time, he was loved and trusted by the tribes of Iraq. The earlier sources state that 'Ali is the one who chose Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari. Khaleefah says in his *Târeekh*: "In that year (37 AH) the two arbitrators met: Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari on behalf of 'Ali and 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ on behalf of Mu'âwiyah."[713] Ibn Sa'd said: "The people got fed up with war and were calling for peace. They appointed two arbitrators. 'Ali appointed Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, and Mu'âwiyah appointed 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ."[714]

Hence we can say that the reports about the role attributed to the pious, devoted worshippers at Ṣiffeen — of being responsible for stopping the fighting and resorting to arbitration, and imposing Abu Moosa as an arbitrator — are no more than historical lies that were fabricated by the Shia storytellers, who never stopped fabricating and distorting the history of Islam by means of false reports. It annoyed them that 'Ali (ﷺ) seemed to be someone who showed compassion to Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria and wanted to reconcile with their traditional enemies. On the other hand, these Shia considered their enemies the Kharijites to be responsible, but they made the Kharijites' actions contradict themselves; the Kharijites are the ones who allegedly forced 'Ali (ﷺ) to accept the arbitration, and they are also the ones who rebelled against him because of his accepting the arbitration.[715]

This brief look at the character of Abu Moosa is strongly connected to our topic, the life and times of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). Abu Moosa was one of the people who had a profound impact on his era, but his character has been subjected to distortion. In most cases, whenever anyone discussed Ṣiffeen and the arbitration, the characters of Abu Moosa and 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ were subjected to distortion, lies and fabrications because of weak and fabricated reports. Hence it is necessary to talk about the biographies of these two great men, and this is one of the aims of writing this book.

3.2. The biography of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ)

His full name was 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il as-Sahmi; his kunyahs are Abu Muhammad and Abu Abdullah. Ibn Isḥâq[716] and az-Zubayr ibn Bakkâr[717] agreed that he became Muslim while he was with the Negus in Abyssinia, and he migrated to Madinah in Safar 8 AH. Ibn Ḥajar stated that he became Muslim in 8 AH before the conquest of Makkah, and it was said that it was between Ḥudaybiyah and Khaybar.[718]

3.2.1. His becoming Muslim

'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ) himself told the story of his coming to Islam. He said: "When we came away from the Battle of the Trench, I gathered together some men who shared my opinion and would listen to me, and I said: 'You know, by Allah, that in my opinion, this affair of Muhammad will go to extraordinary lengths. I am thinking of something, and I would like to know what you think of it.' They said: 'What are you thinking of?' I said: 'I think that we should go to the Negus and stay with him. If Muhammad conquers our people, we will be with the Negus, and we would prefer to be subject to his authority rather than to Muhammad. On the other hand, if our people prevail, they know us and will treat us well.' They thought that my suggestion was excellent, so I told them to collect something that we could take as a gift to the Negus. Leather was the product of our land that he most valued, so we collected a large quantity and took it to him.

"By Allah, while we were with him, 'Amr ibn Umayyah aḍ-Ḍamri came to him; he had been sent by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to find out about Ja'far and his companions. He had an audience with the Negus. When he came out, I said to my companions that if I were to go to the Negus and ask him to let me have him, he would give him to me. Then we could cut off his head, and if I did that, Quraysh

would see that I had served them well by killing Muhammad's messenger. So I went in to the Negus and prostrated before him as I usually did. He welcomed me as a friend and asked if I had brought anything from our country. When I told him that I had brought a large quantity of leather, and I produced it, he was greatly pleased and wanted it. I said: 'O King, I have just seen a man leave your presence. He is the messenger of an enemy of ours, so let me have him that I may kill him, for he has killed some of our chiefs and best men.' He was enraged, and reaching out his hand he gave his nose such a blow that I thought he must have broken it. If the ground had opened up, I would have gone into it to escape his anger. Then I said to him: 'O King, by Allah, if I had thought that this would be distasteful to you, I would not have asked it.' He said: 'Are you asking me to give you the messenger of a man to whom the great Namoos [Jibreel (ﷺ)] comes as he used to come to Moosa — so that you can kill him?' I said: 'O King, is he really like that?' He said: 'Woe to you, O 'Amr! Obey me and follow him, for by Allah, he is right. He will triumph over his adversaries as Moosa triumphed over Pharaoh and his armies.' I said: 'Will you accept my oath of allegiance to him in Islam?' He said: 'Yes,' and stretched out his hand, and I swore my allegiance to him in Islam. Then I went out to my companions; my opinion had changed from what it was before, but I concealed my Islam from them.

"Then I went out, heading towards the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) so that I might become Muslim, and I met Khâlid ibn al-Waleed. That was just before the conquest of Makkah, and he was coming from Makkah. I said: 'Where are you going, O Abu Sulaymân?' He said: 'By Allah, the way has become clear. The man is indeed a Prophet, and I am going to become Muslim, by Allah. How much longer should I delay?' I said: 'By Allah, I have only come to become Muslim.' So we went to Madinah, to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Khâlid ibn al-Waleed went ahead of me and became Muslim and

gave his oath of allegiance, then I came close and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I will give you my oath of allegiance on the basis that my previous sins will be forgiven and no mention will be made of what went before.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'O 'Amr, give your oath of allegiance, for Islam erases all that came before it, and hijrah erases all that came before it.' So I gave my oath of allegiance and departed."[719]

According to another report, he said: "...when Allah put Islam in my heart, I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: 'Hold out your right hand so that I might swear allegiance to you.' He held out his right hand, but I withdrew my hand. He said: 'What is the matter, O 'Amr?' I said: 'I want to stipulate a condition.' He said, 'What do you want to stipulate?' I said: 'That I will be forgiven.' He said: 'Do you not know, O 'Amr, that Islam destroys whatever came before it, and that hijrah destroys whatever came before it, and that hajj destroys whatever came before it?'"[720]

3.2.2. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ leads a campaign to Dhât as-Salâsil 7 AH

The Prophet (ﷺ) prepared an army, led by 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, to go to Dhât as-Salâsil in order to punish Quḍâ'ah, who had gathered with the aim of advancing on Madinah. They had developed a high level of confidence against the Muslims because of what had happened at Mu'tah, where they had taken part in the battle on the Byzantine side. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ went to their land, accompanied by three hundred of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr. When he reached the place of the enemy's gathering, he heard that they had gathered in huge numbers, so he sent word to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asking for reinforcements, who arrived under the leadership of Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrâḥ.[721] The Muslims fought the disbelievers, and 'Amr penetrated deep into the land of Quḍâ'ah, whose people

scattered and ran away. 'Amr succeeded in reinstating the position of Islam on the Syrian border and restoring the allies of the Muslims to the way they had been. Other tribes also entered into an alliance with the Muslims, and many people from the tribes of Banu 'Abs, Banu Murrah and Banu Dhubyân became Muslim. The tribe of Fazârah and its chief 'Uyaynah ibn Ḥuṣn also entered into an alliance with the Muslims, and they were followed by Banu Sulaym, under the leadership of al-'Abbâs ibn Mirdâs and Banu Ashja'. The Muslims became the strongest power in northern Arabia, if not in the entire land.[722]

From this campaign we learn a number of lessons and issues regarding 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, including the following:

3.2.2.a. The sincerity of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ

'Amr said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent word to me saying: 'Put on your garment and take up your weapon, then come to me.' I came to him while he was making wuḍoo'. He looked up at me, then he looked away and said: 'I want to send you at the head of an army. Allah will keep you safe and grant you booty, and I hope that you will acquire some wealth from it.' I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I did not become Muslim for the sake of wealth; I became Muslim out of love for Islam and to be with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).' He said: 'O 'Amr, good (ḥalâl) wealth is good for the good man.'"[723]

This attitude is indicative of the strong faith and sincerity of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ and his desire to be close to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) explained that ḥalâl wealth is a blessing when it is possessed by a righteous man, because he is seeking the countenance of Allah and will spend it in good ways, such as sponsoring orphans and widows, calling people to Islam, supporting the mujâhideen, charitable projects and other good

causes, as well as maintaining dignity for himself and his family[724] and helping Muslims. From this hadith, we may understand that if a person strives to acquire ḥalâl wealth, this is something praiseworthy that was encouraged by the Prophet (ﷺ). If a man has wealth, and we can manage to guide him and make him righteous, then he may combine ḥalâl wealth with righteousness, as in this hadith. This is also something desirable and praiseworthy; it is good for him and for Islam and the Muslims.

3.2.2.b. 'Amr's keenness to keep his troops safe

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent 'Amr on the campaign to Dhât as-Salâsil, it got cold, but 'Amr told his troops that no one should light a fire. When they came back, they complained about him. He explained: "O Prophet of Allah, they were few in number, and I was afraid that the enemy might realise that they were few in number. I told them not to pursue the enemy lest they be ambushed." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was impressed by that.[725]

3.2.2.c. 'Amr's understanding of Islam

'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ) said: "I had a wet dream on a cold night during the campaign to Dhât as-Salâsil. I was afraid that I would die if I did ghusl, so I performed the dry-earth ablution, then I led my companions in praying the dawn prayer. They mentioned that to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said: 'O 'Amr, did you lead your companions in prayer when you were in a state of impurity?' I told him what had prevented me from doing ghusl, and I said: 'I heard that Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And do not kill yourselves [nor kill one another]. Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 29)*. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) smiled and did not say anything."[726]

This ijtihâd on the part of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ is indicative of his deep understanding of Islam, his mature thinking and his subtle derivation of the ruling from the evidence.[727] The scholars derived

many rulings from this incident, but what is particularly notable[728] is the speed with which 'Amr established a connection with the Qur'an, to the point that he was able to understand matters through these verses although he had only been a Muslim for four months. This is indicative of his keenness to learn about the religion of Allah (ﷻ). It may be, and this is likely, that 'Amr had been in touch with the Qur'an before he became Muslim, following whatever verses he could hear. In that case, we have another example of the greatness of this Qur'an, which had a great impact even on the disbelievers and made them, despite their great enmity towards the religion, try to listen to it. We saw that during the Makkan period, and this is supported by what we see here of his knowledge of the Qur'an when he suggested that the Negus ask the Muslims who had emigrated to Abyssinia about their opinion of 'Eesa (ﷺ).[729]

3.2.3. Virtues of 'Amr

3.2.3.a. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) testified to his faith

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The people have become Muslims, but 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ has become a believer."[730] According to another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The two sons of al-'Âṣ are believers: 'Amr and Hishâm."[731] 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ said: "The people in Madinah with the Prophet (ﷺ) panicked and scattered, but I saw Sâlim put on a sword and sit in the mosque, and when I saw that I did the same. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out and saw Sâlim and me, and he said: 'O people, your refuge should be with Allah and His Messenger; why did you not do what these two men did?'"[732]

3.2.3.b. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave him precedence over others and testified that he was one of the righteous men of Quraysh

It is narrated that 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ) said: "Since we became Muslim, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never regarded anyone as equal to Khâlid and me in fighting."[733] It was narrated that Abu Mulaykah said: "Talhah ibn 'Ubaydullah said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ is one of the righteous men of Quraysh."'"[734] This is an example of the Prophet's knowledge of people's qualities and of how to make the most of those qualities.

3.2.3.c. Supplication of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for him

It was narrated from Zuhayr ibn Qays al-Balawi that his paternal uncle 'Ilqimah ibn Ramthah al-Balawi said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ to Bahrain, then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) dozed off. He woke up and said: 'May Allah have mercy on 'Amr.' We discussed which 'Amr it was, then he dozed off a second time. He woke up and said: 'May Allah have mercy on 'Amr.' He dozed off a third time, then he woke up and said: 'May Allah have mercy on 'Amr.' We said: 'Which 'Amr, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: "Amr ibn al-'Âṣ.' We said: 'What about him?' He said: 'I remembered him because every time I asked people to give in charity, he would bring his charity and be very generous. I would ask him: "Where did you get this from, O 'Amr?", and he would say: "From Allah." 'Amr spoke the truth; 'Amr has a great deal of good with Allah.'" Zuhayr said: "When the fitnah broke out, I said, 'I will follow this man, of whom the Messenger of Allah said what he said, and I never left him.'"[735]

3.2.4. His deeds at the time of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent 'Amr to call the two sons of al-Jilindi, Jayfar and 'Abbâd, to Islam. He called them to Islam, and they believed in the Prophet (ﷺ); they allowed 'Amr to collect zakâh and judge disputes between their people, and they supported him against those who opposed him.[736] After the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Bakr sent 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ with an army to Palestine, after giving him the choice between staying in the post to which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had appointed him or choosing something that would be better for him in this world and the hereafter. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ wrote to him, saying: "I am one of the arrows of Islam, and after Allah, you are the one to shoot it and collect (the arrows). So choose the strongest, most pious and best of them and use it."[737] When he came to Madinah, Abu Bakr (ﷺ) told him to stay outside Madinah and camp until he had urged the people to join him, then he sent him with an army to Syria.[738] During the Battle of Yarmook, 'Amr was in charge of the right flank, and his participation had a great impact on the Muslim victory.

After the death of Abu Bakr (ﷺ), 'Amr remained in Syria and played an effective role in the Islamic conquest of Syria. Along with Shuraḥbeel ibn Ḥasanah, he conquered Beesân, Tiberias and Ajnadeen.[739] He also conquered Gaza, al-Ludd (Lod), Yubna, 'Amwâs (Emmaus), Bayt Jibreen, Yafa (Jaffa), Rafaḥ and Jerusalem. Not only did 'Amr (ﷺ) conquer Syria; he also conquered famous cities in Egypt. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) issued instructions to 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ), after he had finished conquering Syria, to march to Egypt with the troops who were with him. He set out until he reached al-'Areesh and conquered it, and he also conquered al-Farma, al-Fusṭâṭ, the Fortress of Babylon, 'Ayn Shams, al-Fayyoom, al-Ashmooneen, Akhmeem, al-Bashrood, Tanees, Dimyâṭ

(Damietta), Toona, Daqhalah, Alexandria and other North African cities such as Barqah, Zuwaylah, and Tripoli.[740] 'Umar (ﷺ) testified to his leadership qualities by saying: "Abu Abdullah should not walk on the earth except as a leader."[741]

At the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), he was one of those who was close to the caliph and one of his consultants. When 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was besieged, 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ left Madinah and headed for Syria, saying: "O people of Madinah, anyone who stays there while this man is killed will be humiliated by Allah. Whoever cannot support him, let him flee." He left, and his two sons Abdullah and Muhammad left with him, after which Ḥassân ibn Thâbit and many others followed suit.[742] When news came of the murder of 'Uthmân and the people's swearing allegiance to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ said: "May Allah have mercy on 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and forgive him." Salâmah ibn Zanbâ' al-Judhâmi said: "O Arabs, there was between you and the fitnah a door, so find another door when that door is broken." 'Amr said: "That is what we want, but nothing can fix the door except a drill, a drill that can ensure justice between the people." He left on foot, weeping and saying: "O 'Uthmân, I weep for the death of modesty and religious commitment." Then he went to Damascus.[743] This is a true picture of 'Amr (ﷺ), which is in harmony with his character, his biography and his closeness to 'Uthmân.

As for the distorted image that shows him as a man of personal interests and ambitions who ran after worldly gains, this is based on the weak and rejected report of al-Wâqidi from Moosa ibn Ya'qoob.[744] A number of writers and historians were influenced by these weak reports, so they depicted 'Amr in the worst possible manner, as in the descriptions given by Maḥmoud Sheet Khaṭṭâb[745] and 'Abdul-Khâliq Sayyid Abu Râbiyah.[746] 'Abbas Maḥmoud al-'Aqqâd stubbornly refused to examine the chains of narration; he

insulted the intelligence of his readers by presenting an image of Mu'âwiyah and 'Amr as opportunists who were pursuing personal interests. All historical critics agree that the reports to which he refers in his analysis are false, but that does not mean anything to al-'Aqqâd. After narrating weak and strange reports, on which no argument can be based, he said: "Let the historical critics say what they want about whether this conversation took place and whether these words are sound. Regardless of whatever is proven to be sound or otherwise with regard to the chain of narration or the text, what there can be no doubt about, even if all history books got together to prove the opposite, is that the deal between the two men was a deal to share authority and power, and the deal between them was based on the share of authority that each of them would have. Were it not for that, there would have been no deal."[747]

The true character of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ is that of a man of principle. He left Madinah when he found himself unable to defend 'Uthmân (ﷺ), for whom he wept bitter tears when he was killed. He was part of the consultative committee at the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), even though he was not a governor. He went to join Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) and cooperated with him to fight the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and seek justice for the martyred caliph.[748] The murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was sufficient to make him very angry with all those criminals who shed blood. He thought it essential to choose a place other than Madinah as a base for seeking vengeance against those who had the audacity to transgress against the sanctuary of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and slay the caliph before the people's eyes. What is strange about 'Amr getting angry for the sake of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)? If anyone doubts this matter, then his doubt is based on fabricated reports, which depict 'Amr as a man whose main concern was authority and power.[749]

3.3. The text of the arbitration document

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

1. This is what has been agreed upon between 'Abi ibn Abi Ṭâlib and Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân and their supporters, as they have agreed to refer to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ) for judgement.

2. In this case, 'Ali represents the people of Iraq, both those who are present and those who are absent, and Mu'âwiyah represents the people of Syria, both those who are present and those who are absent.

3. We have agreed to accept the ruling of the Qur'an and adhere to what is mentioned in the Book from beginning to end; we will do what it commands and refrain from what it tells us to refrain from. This is the basis of our agreement.

4. 'Ali and his supporters accept Abdullah ibn Qays as a representative and arbitrator, and Mu'âwiyah accepts 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ as a representative and arbitrator.

5. 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah have taken from Abdullah ibn Qays and 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ a pledge to adhere to the covenant of Allah and His Messenger, to take the Qur'an as their guide and not to refer to anything else with regard to arbitration, which will be done on the basis of what is written in the Book. With regard to that which they do not find in the Qur'an, they will refer to the comprehensive Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, and they will not accept anything that goes against it or overlook the Sunnah for some specious argument.

6. Abdullah ibn Qays and 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ have taken a pledge from 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah to accept their verdict, which is based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet. They have no right to reject that or to go against it.

7. Both arbitrators are to be granted safety and security when they give their verdict. Their lives, wealth, hair, skin, families and children are safe as long as they do not transgress the limits, no matter who agrees or disagrees with them, and the Ummah should support their verdict, which is based on the Book of Allah.

8. If one of the two arbitrators dies before reaching a verdict, his party has the right to appoint someone else in his place from among the people of good character and piety, on the same basis as the covenant to which his predecessor agreed.

9. If one of the two leaders dies before the set time for deciding this matter ends, his group may appoint a man in his place with whose character they are pleased.

10. The two parties agree, with immediate effect, to engage in negotiations and lay down their weapons.

11. What we have mentioned in this document is binding with immediate effect on the two leaders, the two arbitrators and the two parties. Allah is the best of witnesses and is sufficient witness. If they transgress the limits, then the Ummah has nothing to do with their verdict, and their covenant is to be rejected.

12. The people are safe; their lives, families, children and wealth are safe until the end of the set period. Weapons are to be laid aside, the roads are to be safe, and anyone of either party who is absent is like those who are present in this regard.

13. The two arbitrators may stay in a place in the middle between the two camps of the people of Iraq and Syria.

14. No one should attend their meetings except with the approval of both arbitrators.

15. The set time for reaching a verdict is the end of the month of Ramadan. If the two arbitrators decide to reach a verdict earlier, then

they may do so. If they decide to delay it until the end of the specified time, they may do so.

16. If they do not rule in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet by the end of the fixed time, then the two groups will resume fighting.

17. The Ummah is bound by the deal that is reached with regard to this matter; all of the Ummah should be united against any party that inclines to evil actions and does wrong.[750]

The contents of this document were witnessed by al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, the two sons of 'Ali, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭâlib, al-Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindi, al-Ashtar ibn al-Ḥârith, Sa'eed ibn al-Qays al-Hamadâni, al-Ḥuṣayn and aṭ-Ṭufayl the two sons of al-Ḥârith ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, Abu Sa'eed ibn Rabee'ah al-Anṣâri, Abdullah ibn Khabbâb ibn al-Aratt, Sahl ibn Hunayf, Abu Bishr ibn 'Umar al-Anṣâri, 'Awf ibn al-Ḥârith ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, Yazeed ibn Abdullah al-Aslami, 'Uqbah ibn 'Âmir al-Juhani, Râfi' ibn Khadeej al-Anṣâri, 'Umar ibn al-Ḥamaq al-Khuzâ'i, an-Nu'mân ibn 'Ajlân al-Anṣâri, Ḥajar ibn 'Adiyy al-Kindi, Yazeed ibn Ḥajiyyah al-Kindi, Mâlik ibn Ka'b al-Hamadâni, Rabee'ah ibn Shuraḥbeel, al-Ḥârith ibn Mâlik, Ḥajar ibn Yazeed and 'Ulbah ibn Ḥujiyyah.

Among the people of Syria, it was witnessed by Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah al-Fihri, Abu al-A'war as-Sulami, Bisr ibn Arṭâ'ah al-Qurashi, Mu'âwiyah ibn Khadeej al-Kindi, al-Makhâriq ibn al-Ḥârith az-Zubaydi, Muslim ibn 'Amr as-Saksi, Abdullah ibn Khâlid ibn al-Waleed, Ḥamzah ibn Mâlik, Subay' ibn Yazeed ibn Abjar al-'Absi, Masrooq ibn Jablah al-'Akki, Yusr ibn Yazeed al-Ḥimyari, Abdullah ibn 'Âmir al-Qurashi, 'Utbah ibn Abi Sufyân, Muhammad ibn Abi Sufyân, Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, 'Ammâr ibn al-Aḥwaṣ al-Kalbi, Mas'adah ibn 'Amr al-'Utbi, aṣ-Ṣabbâḥ ibn Jalhamah al-

Ḥimyari, 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Dhil-Kilâ', Tamâmah ibn Ḥawshab and 'Ilqimah ibn Ḥakam. It was written on Wednesday 17 Ṣafar 37 AH.[751]

3.4. The famous story of the arbitration, which is incorrect for many reasons

A great deal has been said about the story of the arbitration, which was narrated by historians and writers on the basis that it was true and proven, with no doubt about it. Some narrated lengthy versions, and some summarised it; some commented on it and derived lessons from it, basing their rulings on the contents of the story. It is very rare to find anyone who examined it in a critical manner. Ibn al-'Arabi did well when he rejected it in general terms, even though he did not go into detail. This is indicative of his strong critical sense in examining texts, because none of the texts of this arbitration story can stand up to critical academic examination. They are false for a number of reasons:[752]

3.4.1.

All of its chains of transmission are weak. The strongest chain by which it was narrated is that narrated by 'Abdur-Razzâq and aṭ-Ṭabari, with a chain of narration whose men are trustworthy, from az-Zuhri with a missing link. They said:

Az-Zuhri said: "In the morning, the people of Syria put up their muṣḥafs and called for applying what they contained, and the people of Iraq were filled with awe, at which point they appointed the two arbitrators. The people of Iraq chose Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, and the people of Syria chose 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ. The two armies at Ṣiffeen parted when the arbitrators were appointed. They (the two arbitrators) stipulated that what the Qur'an enjoined was to be followed and what

it forbade was to be avoided, and that they would choose what was best for the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ). They were to meet in Doomat al-Jandal, and if they did not meet for some reason, they would meet the following year in Adhraḥ.

"When 'Ali left, the Kharijites disagreed and rebelled. This was the first time they appeared as a group, and they declared war against him. The reason for their rebellion was that human beings had been appointed to decide about the ruling of Allah (ﷻ). They said that there is no ruling except the ruling of Allah, so they fought.

"When the two arbitrators met in Adhraḥ, al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah joined them, along with some other people. The two arbitrators sent for Abdullah ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb and Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, and they came to them with many men. Mu'âwiyah came with the people of Syria, but 'Ali and the people of Iraq refused to come. Al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah said to some prominent people of Quraysh: 'Do you think there is anyone out there who can tell whether these two arbitrators will agree on something or will never agree?' They said: 'We do not think that anyone knows that.' He said: 'By Allah, I think that I should be able to find that out from them when I speak to each one on his own and discuss it with him.'

"He entered upon 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, starting with him. He said: 'O Abu Abdullah, tell me about what I am going to ask you. What do you think of those of us who remained neutral, for we were unsure about the matter that was clear to you, namely fighting, and we thought that it was better to take our time until we became certain and the Ummah became united?'" He said: 'I think of you who remained neutral as being behind the righteous and ahead of the evildoers.' Al-Mugheerah left and did not ask him about anything else.

"Then he entered upon Abu Moosa and said something similar to what he had said to 'Amr. Abu Moosa said: 'I think you are the

wisest of people; you are what is left of the righteous Muslims.'

"Al-Mugheerah left without asking him about anything else. Then he met with the wise people of Quraysh, to whom he had spoken earlier, and said: 'These two will never agree on anything.'

"The two arbitrators met and talked. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ said: 'O Abu Moosa, I think the first thing we should decide about is to rule in favour of those who fulfilled their promise and against those who betrayed, because of their betrayal.' Abu Moosa said: 'What do you mean?' He said: 'Don't you know that Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria fulfilled their promise and came to the appointment that we made with them?' He said: 'Yes.' 'Amr said: 'Write it down." So Abu Moosa wrote it down. 'Amr said: 'O Abu Moosa, would you like to suggest a man to be in charge of this Ummah? Tell me his name. If I agree with it, I will follow you in that; otherwise I will suggest a name and you should follow me.' Abu Moosa said: 'Do you want me to suggest Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân to you?' They did not end their meeting before trading insults; then they went out to the people, and Abu Moosa said: 'I found the likeness of 'Amr to be the likeness of the one of whom Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And recite [O Muhammad] to them the story of him to whom We gave Our *Ayât* [proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.], but he threw them away﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 175).*

"Then when Abu Moosa fell silent, 'Amr spoke, saying: 'O people, I found the likeness of Abu Moosa to be the likeness of those of whom Allah says: ﴾The likeness of those who were entrusted with the [obligation of the] Tawrât [Torah] [i.e. to obey its commandments and to practise its laws], but who subsequently failed in those [obligations], is as the likeness of a donkey which carries huge burdens of books [but understands nothing from them]﴿ *(Qur'an 62: 5).*' Each of them wrote a letter explaining his opinion to the various regions."[753]

Az-Zuhri was not present at this incident, so this report is missing a link in its chain of narration, and his reports with missing links carry no weight and cannot be taken as evidence,[754] as determined by the scholars.

There is another chain of transmission, through which Ibn 'Asâkir narrated this report with his chain of narration going back to az-Zuhri. It is also missing a link, and it includes Abu Bakr ibn Abi Sabrah, of whom Imam Aḥmad said: "He was a fabricator of hadith."[755] Its chain of narration also includes al-Wâqidi, whose reports are rejected.[756] This is the text of his report:

"The people of Syria lifted up the muṣḥafs and said: 'We call you to the Book of Allah and to rule in accordance with what it contains.' This was a plot by 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ. They reached a deal and wrote a document stating that they would meet at the beginning of the year in Adhraḥ. They appointed two arbitrators to judge between the people, and everyone was to accept their verdict. 'Ali appointed Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, and Mu'âwiyah appointed 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ. Then the people parted; 'Ali went back to Kufah with divisions and trouble among his party. Some of his companions disagreed with him, and the Kharijites among his party rebelled against him. They objected to his appointing an arbitrator, and they said: 'There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah.' Mu'âwiyah went back to Syria with his followers in harmony and united. One year later, the two arbitrators met in Adhraḥ in Sha'bân 38 AH, and the people gathered around them. There was a discussion between them in which they agreed on something in private, but 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ went against it in public. He let Abu Moosa speak first and declare that he was deposing both 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, then 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ spoke, deposing 'Ali but affirming Mu'âwiyah. The two arbitrators and those who were with them parted, and the people of Syria swore allegiance to Mu'âwiyah in the month of Dhul-Qa'dah 38 AH."[757]

All of the chains of narration of Abu Makhnaf are weak because of him. The first reason is that Abu Makhnaf Looṭ ibn Yaḥya is weak and not trustworthy.[758] He was a dishonest narrator and an extreme Râfiḍi. The second reason is that Ibn Sa'd said concerning him: "He was weak."[759] Bukhâri and Abu Ḥâtim said: "Yaḥya al-Qaṭṭân regarded him as weak."[760] 'Uthmân ad-Dârimi said: "He is weak."[761] An-Nasâ'i said: "He is weak."[762]

These are the versions of the well-known story of the arbitration and the alleged debate between Abu Moosa and 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ. Can proof be based on something like this, or can these reports be relied on with regard to the history of the noble Companions and the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the most exemplary of eras? If there was nothing wrong with these reports except some contradictions in their texts, that would be sufficient to regard them as weak. So how about if we add to that the weakness of their chains of narration?[763]

3.4.2.

This issue is very important with regard to belief and legislation. Despite its importance, it is not transmitted by any sound chain of narration. It is impossible that the scholars would unanimously ignore it, even though it is so important and there is such a great need for it.[764]

3.4.3.

There is a report which refutes these reports completely. It was narrated in brief by Bukhari in his *Tareekh,* with a chain of narration whose narrators are trustworthy. It was also narrated by Ibn 'Asâkir from al-Ḥuṣayn ibn al-Mundhir, that Mu'âwiyah sent him to 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, instructing him: "I have heard about 'Amr something that I dislike; go to him and ask him about the matter concerning which 'Amr and Abu Moosa met, and what happened in their meeting."

'Amr said: "People talked too much about this issue, but nothing of what they describe happened. When I met Abu Moosa, I said to him: 'What do you think about this matter?' He said: 'I think that he ('Ali) is one of those with whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was pleased when he died.' I said: 'How about me and Mu'âwiyah? Where do we fit in?' He said: If he ('Ali) seeks your help, then you are a good help, and if he decides not to seek your help, he can run his affairs without your help."[765]

Abu Moosa spoke of 'Amr's piety and how he used to take stock of himself and remember the lives of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), as well as his worries about what had happened after they were gone. Abu Moosa said: 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ said to me: "By Allah, if Abu Bakr and 'Umar forsook this wealth when it was permissible for them, is it possible that they had an unfair deal and were wronged, or was it a misjudgement on their part? By Allah, they did not have an unfair deal and they were not wronged, and their decision was not based on misjudgement. By Allah, weakness only came to us because of our deeds."[766]

3.4.4.

Mu'âwiyah affirmed 'Ali's superiority over him and that he was more entitled to the caliphate than him. He did not dispute with him for the caliphate or seek it for himself during 'Ali's lifetime. Yaḥya ibn Sulaymân al-Ja'fi narrated, with a good chain of narration, from Abu Muslim al-Khawlâni that he said to Mu'âwiyah: "Are you disputing with 'Ali for the caliphate or are you like him?" He said: "No; I know that he is better than me and is more entitled (to the caliphate). But don't you know that 'Uthmân was killed wrongfully, and I am his paternal cousin and next of kin, who should seek retaliation for him? Go to 'Ali and tell him to hand over the killers of 'Uthmân to us, and I will submit to his rule." They went to 'Ali and

spoke to him, but he did not hand them (the murderers) over to him.[767]

This is the basis of the dispute between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them), and the arbitration was aimed at resolving this matter of conflict, not choosing or dismissing a caliph.[768] Ibn Ḥazm said concerning this matter that 'Ali fought Mu'âwiyah because the latter refused to carry out his instructions in Syria, and he was the caliph who was to be obeyed. Mu'âwiyah never denied 'Ali's superiority and entitlement to the caliphate, but his reasoning led him to think that bringing the murderers of 'Uthmân to justice took precedence over swearing allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ), and he thought that he was more right to seek retaliation for the murder of 'Uthmân and to speak of it than the sons of 'Uthmân and al-Ḥakam ibn Abil-'Âṣ, because of his age and his ability to pursue the matter. He was correct in that regard, but he was wrong with regard to giving this matter precedence over swearing allegiance to the caliph.[769]

Understanding the dispute on this basis — which is the reality of the dispute — highlights the extent to which the reports quoted above about the arbitration are mistaken in the way in which they depicted the ruling of the two arbitrators. The two arbitrators were given authority to issue a verdict concerning the dispute between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, but the dispute between them was not concerning the caliphate and which of them was more entitled to it; rather it had to do with carrying out a retaliatory punishment on the murderers of 'Uthmân. This had nothing to do with the issue of caliphate at all. If the two arbitrators had ignored this basic issue that they had been asked to decide about, and taken a decision concerning the caliphate instead, as the widely circulated reports claim, then what that means is that they did not solve the disputed issue and did not understand the issue of this case, and this is something that is very unlikely.[770]

3.4.5.

The conditions that must be met by the caliph are good character, knowledge and wisdom to enable him to conduct his subjects' affairs and take care of their interests. He should also be of Qurayshi descent.[771] These conditions were met by 'Ali (ﷺ). Was allegiance to him valid or not? If it was valid — and there is no doubt concerning that — and the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, the decision-makers, swore allegiance to him, and his opponents confirmed that to him, then the words of Mu'âwiyah indicate that "if the caliph is not devoid of the qualities of a leader and those who appointed him decide to depose him, they have no right to do that according to consensus, because once a caliph is appointed and allegiance is sworn to him, obedience to him becomes binding, and there is no option of deposing him without a reason that dictates that. Caliphate cannot be effective, and the position cannot achieve the required purpose, unless obedience is binding. If the people are given the option of deposing the caliph because they prefer someone else, then the caliph can never be in full control, and he will have no power or ability. The post of caliph would make no sense at all."[772]

Therefore the issue is not as depicted in these reports, which suggest that anyone who does not like a caliph may depose him. No one has the right to depose the caliph except those who appointed him, namely the decision makers, provided that the caliph has gone against the conditions of his appointment. Did 'Ali (ﷺ) do anything to make the decision-makers decide to dismiss him from the caliphate, when he was the Rightly Guided Caliph, in which case it might be suggested that the two arbitrators had agreed on that? He did nothing until he died that might dictate dismissing him from his post; he did nothing except act justly, strive hard, fear Allah (ﷻ) and do good.[773]

3.4.6.

The time when the arbitration took place was a time of fitnah, and the Muslims were in a situation of confusion despite the fact that they had a caliph, so how would they have ended up if the caliph was deposed? Undoubtedly the situation would have gotten worse, but the Companions were too wise and rational to do such a thing. Hence it is clear that this idea is invalid according to both reason and the texts.

3.4.7.

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) limited the caliphate to the members of the consultative committee, of whom there were six, and the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr approved of that. This was a hint that the caliphate should not go beyond these six men as long as any of them were still alive. At the time of the arbitration, none of them was left except Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ, who withdrew, showing no interest in any position of authority, and 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), who held the position of caliph and was the best of the six after 'Uthmân (ﷺ). So how could this matter of caliphate be passed to someone else?[774]

3.4.8.

The reports state that the people of Syria swore allegiance to Mu'âwiyah following the arbitration. The question is, what reason prompted the people of Syria to swear allegiance to Mu'âwiyah? The two arbitrators did not reach any conclusion, so there was no reason to attribute that action to the results of the arbitration. Moreover, Ibn 'Asâkir narrated, with a chain whose narrators are trustworthy, that Sa'eed ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez at-Tanookhi,[775] the most knowledgeable of the people about Syrian affairs,[776] said: " 'Ali in Iraq was called 'Amir al-Mu'mineen', and Mu'âwiyah in Syria was called 'the Amir'. When 'Ali died, Mu'âwiyah in Syria was called Amir al-

Mu'mineen."[777] This text shows that allegiance was not given to Mu'âwiyah as caliph until after the death of 'Ali. This was also the view of aṭ-Ṭabari, who said, concerning the last events of the year 40 AH: "In this year, allegiance was sworn to Mu'âwiyah in Ayliya'."[778] Ibn Katheer commented on this, saying: "In other words, when 'Ali died, the people of Syria swore allegiance to Mu'âwiyah as caliph, because in their view there was no one left to dispute this position with him."[779] The people of Syria knew that Mu'âwiyah was not equal to 'Ali in terms of being qualified for the caliphate and that it was not permissible for him to become caliph when it was possible to appoint 'Ali (ﷺ), whose virtue, seniority, knowledge, religious commitment, courage and all other virtues were well known to them, just like the virtues of his brethren Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them).[780]

In addition to that, the texts forbid swearing allegiance to a new caliph when the first caliph is already present. Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'If allegiance is sworn to two caliphs, then execute the second one.'"[781] There are many similar texts.[782] It is impossible that the Companions would have unanimously agreed to go against that.[783]

3.4.9.

Bukhari narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Ibn 'Umar said: "I entered upon Ḥafṣah and said: 'You see the fitnah that is taking place among the people, and I was not asked to get involved at all.' She said: 'Go and catch up with them, because they are waiting for you, and I fear that your staying away from them may lead to division.'" She kept on at him until he went. After the meeting ended, Mu'âwiyah said: "Whoever wants to say anything concerning this issue, let him raise his head, for we have more right to it than him and his father."

Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah said: "Why don't you answer him?" Abdullah said: "So I changed the way I was sitting, and I wanted to say, 'The one who is more entitled to this position than you is the one who fought you and your father for the sake of Islam.' But I was afraid to say something that might cause division and bloodshed and could be misinterpreted, so instead I talked about what Allah has prepared in paradise." Ḥabeeb said: "Allah has protected you from causing any fitnah."[784]

It may be understood that this report is referring to the time when allegiance was sworn to Mu'âwiyah as caliph, but it does not contain any clear indication to that effect. Some of the scholars said that this report refers to the meeting in which al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ) reconciled with Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ). Ibn al-Jawzi said: "This speech was given at the time of Mu'âwiyah, when he wanted to make his son Yazeed his heir (to the caliphate)." And Ibn Ḥajar said that it was at the time of arbitration.[785] However, the apparent meaning of the text supports the first two views. The words "I was afraid to say something that might cause division and bloodshed" are indicative of the unity that existed at the time of Mu'âwiyah, because at the time of the arbitration there was division and dissent, not unity and harmony.[786]

3.4.10.

The real conclusion of the arbitration. There is no doubt that the disputed issue, which the two arbitrators decided to refer to the Ummah and to the members of the consultative committee, was nothing other than the point of dispute between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, namely the issue of the murderers of 'Uthmân. Mu'âwiyah was not laying claim to the caliphate or denying 'Ali's right to it, as has been established above. Rather, he refused to swear allegiance to him and obey his instructions in Syria, since he had authority there (in reality

if not legitimately), and what helped him was the people's obedience to him, for he had been its governor for twenty years.[787] Ibn Diḥyah al-Kalbi said in his book *A'lâm an-Naṣr al-Mubeen fil-Mufâḍalah bayna Ahl Ṣiffeen*: "Abu Bakr Muhammad aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Ash'ari — al-Bâqillâni — said in *Manâqib al-A'immah*: 'The two arbitrators never reached a decision to depose 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ). Even if they had reached a decision to depose him, he could not have been deposed unless the Qur'an or Sunnah, which were the reference points for them both, dictated that he should be deposed, provided that the two arbitrators both agreed to that, or until they could explain what dictated deposing him on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The text of 'Ali's letter stipulated that the two arbitrators should judge in accordance with the Book of Allah from beginning to end, and that they should not go beyond that, drift away from it, follow their whims and desires or be biased. He took the most solemn pledge from them that if they went beyond the Book of Allah, their verdict would not count. The Qur'an and Sunnah confirmed his position as caliph and praised him, and they testified to his sincerity, good character, leadership, seniority in Islam, impressive efforts in jihad against the polytheists, closeness to the leader of the Messengers, unique qualities of deep knowledge of rulings, wisdom and the fact that he was entitled to leadership and qualified to carry the burden of caliphate.'"[788]

3.4.11.

Where the meeting was held. The appointment for the meeting between the two arbitrators, as it says in the document, was to be in Ramadan 37 AH, if nothing happened to prevent it, in a place between Iraq and Syria. The place chosen was Doomat al-Jandal,[789] according to trustworthy reports, and Adhraḥ,[790] according to other reports which are less authentic. Perhaps the fact that the two places

are close to one another is the reason for the difference in the reports, as Khaleefah ibn Khayyâṭ[791] said: "Adhraḥ, which is close to Doomat al-Jandal, was also mentioned. The meeting took place at the appointed time with no problems."[792]

The place where the two arbitrators met was Doomat al-Jandal. This is contrary to what was stated by Yaqoot al-Ḥamawi, who said that the arbitration took place in Adhraḥ and mentioned as evidence for that some reports, which he did not actually quote, as well as some lines of poetry.[793]

3.4.12.

Was Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ present at the meeting of the two arbitrators? The two arbitrators met at the appointed time and place, each of them accompanied by a few hundred people who represented the two delegations, one group representing the people of Iraq and the other representing the people of Syria. The two arbitrators asked a number of prominent people from Quraysh to be present so that they could consult them and ask for their opinions, but many of the senior Companions, who had kept out of the fight from the beginning, were not present. The best of these was Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ (ﷺ), who was not present at the arbitration; he did not want that, and he never thought of it.[794] It was narrated from 'Âmir ibn Sa'd that his brother 'Umar went to Sa'd, who was tending his sheep outside Madinah. When he came to him, he said: "O my father, are you content to be like a Bedouin, tending your sheep, while the people are disputing power in Madinah?" Sa'd struck 'Umar on the chest and said: "Be quiet! I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'Allah loves the slave who is pious, pure and not prominent.'"[795]

3.5. Is it possible to learn from the arbitration incident in resolving conflicts among Muslim states?

From the arbitration incident, we can learn about resolving conflicts among Muslim states by making all the leaders of Islamic states, and hence the Muslim Ummah that they rule, face up to their responsibilities by putting serious pressure on the two disputing parties so that they will stop fighting and will resort to arbitration, as prescribed in Islam. Thus each side may send an arbitrator to reach a verdict concerning this dispute in light of the following:

1. Deciding the extent of their authority with regard to issuing the verdict that is required to solve the problem which is the cause of the conflict.

2. Making the sources of Islamic legislation the only reference points for issuing these rulings and solutions that could decide the issues of the dispute.

3. Taking a solemn pledge from each side involved in the conflict, and from all the leaders of Muslim countries, to accept the rulings and legitimate solutions issued by the two arbitrators to put an end to the current conflict. The decision is binding and must be executed in accordance with the rulings of Islam; going against it, or approving of going against it, will be regarded as a sinful action according to Sharia.

4. If the two arbitrators issue the rulings and solutions that they have agreed upon, and the two sides submit to that, then the matter is settled.

5. If one or both parties refuse to accept the verdict of the two arbitrators, any party that refuses is regarded to be the

party that was in the wrong, whether the refusal comes from one or both of them. In that case, it is Islamically binding upon Muslim forces in other countries to follow the instructions and military decrees issued by the two arbitrators to put an end to the conflict by force, by intervening in a way that does not lead to harm or risk that is greater than that of the current conflict.

6. Part of the authority of the two arbitrators, on the basis of the agreement, is to issue decrees that have to do with mobilising armed forces in other Muslim countries, so as to resolve the current conflict in the manner described above.[796]

Perhaps resorting to this method of solving conflicts among different countries is a means of blocking foreign forces who interfere in Muslim conflicts on the grounds that one of the parties called on them to intervene. They take advantage of this opportunity to conspire against the Muslims, strive to make these conflicts escalate, and impose a solution that appeals to them and serves their interests only. This leaves the Muslims to suffer, after that, from the consequences of that solution in a manner that is worse than what they suffered during the conflict itself. This suffering does not concern the foreign forces at all; in fact, this suffering is one of the aims of the poor solutions they offer. We say: perhaps resorting to arbitration in the manner described above will block the way for those foreign forces which try to cause division in the Muslim ranks. Moreover, it should be noted that the Islamically binding nature of the solution reached through arbitration, as we have discussed, is based on the consensus of the Companions. The Companions, at the time of the conflict that arose between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, were all agreed on resorting to arbitration and accepted it unanimously, whether these Companions were on the side of 'Ali or on the side of Mu'âwiyah, or were among those who kept

away from both sides, such as Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ, Ibn 'Umar and others (may Allah be pleased with them all.)[797]

3.6. Attitude of Ahl as-Sunnah towards these wars

The attitude of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah towards this war that took place between the Companions (ﷺ) is to refrain from discussing what happened between them except in a manner that is befitting to them (may Allah be pleased with them), because deliberating about what happened among them may generate enmity, hatred and resentment against one of the two parties. It is obligatory for every Muslim to love all of the Companions, to ask Allah (ﷻ) to be pleased with all of them and to have mercy on all of them, to acknowledge their virtues and recognise their great deeds and noble character. What happened between them was based only on independent judgements (ijtihâd), and they will all be rewarded, whether they were right or wrong, but the reward of those who got it right will be double that of those who got it wrong on the basis of their independent reasoning. Of the Companions, both the one who killed and the one who was killed will be in paradise. Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah do not regard it as permissible to debate about the conflict between them.

Before quoting the opinions of a number of Sunni scholars explaining their attitude towards the dispute among the Companions, I shall quote some texts relating to the fighting that occurred among the Companions, to see how it was described in those texts:[798]

3.6.1.

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And if two parties [or groups] among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both. But if

one of them outrages against the other, then fight you [all] against the one that which outrages till it complies with the Command of Allah. Then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily, Allah loves those who are the equitable.》 *(Qur'an 49: 9)*

In this verse, Allah (ﷻ) enjoins reconciliation among the believers if fighting occurs among them. They are brothers, and this fighting does not mean that they are no longer believers, since Allah (ﷻ) calls them believers here and enjoins reconciliation among them. If fighting does take place among ordinary believers, and it does not mean that they are no longer believers, then the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who fought at the Battle of the Camel and in subsequent battles are the first who should be included under the heading of believers that is mentioned in this verse. Before their Lord, they are still true believers, and the conflict that arose among them does not affect their faith at all because it came about on the basis of independent reasoning.[799]

3.6.2.

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'There will be a group who will go beyond the pale of Islam at the time of Muslim division, and they will be killed by the group that is closer to the truth.'"[800]

The division referred to in this hadith is the dispute between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both). The Prophet (ﷺ) described both groups as being Muslims and connected to the truth. This hadith is one of the signs of his prophethood, because things turned out exactly as foretold by the Prophet (ﷺ). The hadith also rules that both groups were Muslims, both the people of Syria and the people of Iraq. It is not true that the people of Syria were regarded as disbelievers, as the Râfiḍis and ignorant folk claim.

This also indicates that the companions of 'Ali (ﷺ) were the closer of the two groups to the truth. It is the view of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah that 'Ali (ﷺ) was in the right, but that Mu'âwiyah will be rewarded inshallah, since he acted on the basis of what he thought was correct. 'Ali was the ruler, though, and he will have two rewards, as is proven in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhâri*: "If the ruler or judge strives to reach a verdict and gets it right, he will have two rewards; if he strives to reach a verdict and gets it wrong, he will have one reward."[801]

3.6.3.

It was narrated that Abu Bakrah said: "While the Prophet (ﷺ) was delivering a sermon, al-Ḥasan came, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This son of mine is a leader, and perhaps Allah will reconcile two great groups of the Muslims through him.'"[802]

In this hadith, we see the Prophet's testimony that both the people of Iraq and the people of Syria are Muslim. This hadith is also a clear refutation of the Kharijites, who regarded both 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, and their supporters, as disbelievers; the testimony included in this hadith is that they were all Muslims. Hence Sufyân ibn 'Uyaynah used to say: "We liked it very much that he referred to the two groups as being two groups of Muslims." Al-Bayhaqi said: "He liked it because the Prophet (ﷺ) called them all Muslims. This is a case of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) foretelling that after the death of 'Ali, al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali would hand the reins of power to Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân."[803]

The hadiths mentioned above refer to the people of Iraq who were with 'Ali (ﷺ) and the people of Syria who were with Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) described them as being part of his Ummah[804] and also described them as all being connected to the truth and not going beyond it. He (ﷺ) testified that they would continue to be believers and would not go beyond that

because of the fighting that took place between them; they were included in the general meaning of the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And if two parties [or groups] among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 9)*. We have seen above that this verse encompasses all of them, may Allah be pleased with them all. They did not become disbelievers or evildoers because of that fighting; rather their actions were based on what they thought was correct. The ruling on their fighting was explained by 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), as we have seen.

What the Muslim must do with regard to what he believes about what happened among the noble Companions (ﷺ) is to follow the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, which means refraining from taking sides concerning what happened among them and not indulging in discussing that except in a manner that befits their status. The books of Ahl as-Sunnah are full of explanations of their sound and pure belief with regard to those who were chosen to be the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Ahl as-Sunnah defined their attitude towards that war that broke out among them in good terms, such as the following:

1. 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the fighting that took place among the Companions, and he said: "This is blood that Allah (ﷻ) kept our hands free from, so why should I not keep my tongue out of it, too? The likeness of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is that of the eye; the best way to heal the eye is not to touch it."[805] Al-Bayhaqi said, commenting on these words of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez (may Allah have mercy on him): "This is very good, because keeping quiet about what does not concern one is the right thing to do."[806]

2. Al-Ḥasan al-Basri (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the Companions fighting amongst themselves, and he

said: "That was fighting in which the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ) were present, and we were not; they knew, but we do not know. In the issues on which they agreed, we follow; on the issues on which they differed, we refrain from taking a stance."[807]

The meaning of these words of al-Ḥasan al-Basri is that the Companions had more knowledge of what they got involved in than we do. All we have to do is follow them in that on which they were agreed, refrain from taking a stance on that concerning which they differed, and not introduce our own opinion. We may be certain that they based their actions on what they thought was correct, seeking Allah (ﷻ) thereby, because they were sincere in their commitment to Islam.[808]

3. Ja'far ibn Muhammad aṣ-Ṣâdiq was asked about what happened among the Companions, and he replied: "I say what Allah said: ﴾The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in a record. My Lord neither errs nor does He forget﴿ *(Qur'an 20: 52)*.

Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after he was asked about what happened between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah: "I do not say anything about them except that which is best."[809] It was narrated that Ibrâheem ibn Âriz al-Faqeeh said: I was with Aḥmad ibn Hanbal when a man asked him about what happened between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah. He turned away from him, and it was said to him: "O Abu Abdullah, he is a man of Banu Hâshim." So he turned towards him and recited the verse: ﴾That was a nation who has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned, and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 141)*.

4. Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawâni said, in the context of his discussion about what the Muslim is obliged to believe about the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and how they should be mentioned: "None of the Companions of the Messenger should be mentioned except in the best way, and we should refrain from debating about the dispute that occurred among them because they are the most deserving of people of finding the best way of interpreting what they said and did, and of being thought of in the most positive manner."[810]

5. Abu Abdullah ibn Baṭṭah said, in his discussion on the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah: "Moreover, we refrain from deliberating about the dispute that arose among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They were with him during major events, and they have precedence over others for that reason. Allah has forgiven them and has enjoined you to pray for forgiveness for them and to draw close to Him by loving them; that was enjoined on the lips of His Prophet. He knew what would happen between them and that they would fight; the reason they were given precedence over all other people is because all their mistakes, deliberate or otherwise, have been pardoned, and all their disputes have been forgiven."[811]

6. Abu Bakr ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Bâqillâni said: "It must be noted that with regard to the disputes that occurred among the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), we should refrain from examining them and ask Allah (ﷻ) to have mercy on all of them; we praise them and ask Allah (ﷻ) to be pleased with them and to grant them safety (in the hereafter), victory and paradise. We believe that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was right in what he did and will have two rewards, and that what the Companions

(ﷺ) did was based on what they thought was best, so they will have one reward; they are not to be regarded as evildoers or innovators. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the *Bay'ah* [pledge] to you [O Muhammad] under the tree, He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down *As-Sakeenah* [calmness and tranquillity] upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory﴾ *(Qur'an 48: 18)*, and the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): 'If the ruler or judge strives to reach a verdict and gets it right, he will have two rewards; if he strives to reach a verdict and gets it wrong, he will have one reward.' If the judge in our time will have two rewards for his effort to reach the right judgement, then what do you think about the effort of those with whom Allah (ﷻ) is pleased and they are pleased with Him? The soundness of this view is indicated by the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) to al-Ḥasan (ﷺ): 'This son of mine is a leader, and perhaps Allah will reconcile two great groups of the Muslims through him.'[812] The greatness of each of the two groups was confirmed, and it was ruled that their Islam was sound. Allah promised to remove the resentment from their hearts when He (ﷻ) said: ﴿And We shall remove from their breasts any deep feeling of bitterness [that they may have]. [So they will be like] brothers facing each other on thrones﴾ *(Qur'an 15: 47)*. So we must refrain from debating about the conflict that occurred among them and keep quiet about it."[813]

7. Ibn Taymiyah said, when discussing the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah concerning the conflict among the Companions: "They refrain from debating the conflict among the Companions and say: 'These reports that mention bad conduct on their part include reports to which things have been

added, or from which things have been omitted, or which have been interpreted in the wrong way. As for those reports that are sound, they are excused for their conduct; or they based their conduct on what they thought was right, and they got it right; or they based their conduct on what they thought was right, but they got it wrong.'"[814]

8. Ibn Katheer said: "With regard to that concerning which they differed amongst themselves after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), some of it happened without their intending it to, such as the Battle of the Camel; some of it was based on what they thought was correct, such as the Battle of Ṣiffeen. A decision may be mistaken, but the person is excused; even if it is wrong, he will be rewarded for it, and the one who gets it right will have two rewards."[815]

9. Ibn Ḥajar said: "Ahl as-Sunnah are unanimously agreed that it is not allowed to criticise any of the Companions because of what happened to them, even if we know who was in the right, because they did not fight these battles except on the basis of what they believed was right. Indeed, it is proven that (the one who got it wrong) will have one reward, and the one who got it right will have two rewards."[816]

Ahl as-Sunnah are unanimously agreed that it is obligatory to refrain from becoming too involved in examining the fitnah that occurred among the Companions after the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), and that we should pray for mercy for them, recognise the virtues of the Companions, acknowledge their precedence and spread reports of their good qualities.[817]

3.7. Warning against some books which distort the history of the Companions

3.7.1. *Al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah,* which is attributed to Ibn Qutaybah

One of the books that distort the history of early Islam is *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, which is attributed to Ibn Qutaybah. Dr. Abdullah 'Usaylân, in his book *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah fi Mizân at-Taḥqeeq al-'Ilmi,* lists a number of points proving that this book attributed to Imam Ibn Qutaybah is false and is a fabrication. The evidence to that effect includes the following:

— None of those who wrote biographies of Ibn Qutaybah said that he wrote a book on history called *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, and we do not know of any book of history that he wrote except for a book called *al-Ma'ârif.*

— Reading through the book gives one the impression that Ibn Qutaybah lived in Damascus and the Maghreb;[818] in fact, he never left Baghdad except to go to ad-Daynoor.

— The methodology and style used by the author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* is completely different from the methodology and style of Ibn Qutaybah, as seen in those of his books that still exist. Ibn Qutaybah wrote lengthy introductions to his books, explaining his methodology and his aim in writing the book. In contrast, the author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* writes a very short introduction that is no more than three lines. In addition, there are differences in style. We do not see this methodology in the books of Ibn Qutaybah.

— The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* narrates from Ibn Abi Layla in a way that gives the impression that he met him. But

this Ibn Abi Layla is Muhammad ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Layla al-Faqeeh, the judge of Kufah, who died in 148 AH. It is well known that Ibn Qutaybah was not born until 213 AH, sixty-five years after the death of Ibn Abi Layla.

— The narrators and shaykhs from whom Ibn Qutaybah usually narrates in his books are not mentioned anywhere in this book.

— A large segment of his reports are narrated using phrases that indicate a problem with the reports. It often says: "They mentioned from some of the Egyptians", "They mentioned from Muhammad ibn Sulaymân from some of the shaykhs of the people of Egypt", "Some of the shaykhs of the Maghreb told us", or "They mentioned from some of the shaykhs." Such phrases are far removed from the usual style and phraseology of Ibn Qutaybah and are not used in any of his books.

— The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* narrates from two of the senior scholars in Egypt, but Ibn Qutaybah never went to Egypt and never learned from these two scholars.[819]

— Ibn Qutaybah is held in high esteem by the scholars, who regard him as one of Ahl as-Sunnah, trustworthy in his knowledge and religious commitment. As-Salafi said: "Ibn Qutaybah was one of the trustworthy and one of Ahl as-Sunnah." Ibn Ḥazm said concerning him: "He was trustworthy in his knowledge and religious commitment." Al-Khaṭeeb al-Baghdadi said likewise. Ibn Taymiyah said concerning him: "Ibn Qutaybah is one of the followers of Aḥmad and Isḥâq and one of the supporters of the Sunni madh-hab."[820] If a man is held in such high esteem by the authentic scholars, does it make sense for him to be the author of a book like *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, which distorts history and attributes to the Companions that which is not true?[821]

Dr. 'Ali Nufay' al-'Alyâni says in his book *'Aqeedat al-Imam Ibn Qutaybah,* concerning *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*: "After a critical reading of the book *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah,* in my view it is most likely that the author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* was an evil Râfiḍi who wanted to attribute this book to Ibn Qutaybah because his books are numerous and because he was well known among the people for supporting Ahl al-Hadith (the people of hadiths). He may have been one of the Râfiḍis of the Maghreb, as Ibn Qutaybah enjoyed a good reputation in the Maghreb."[822]

What makes it likely that the author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* was a Râfiḍi is the following:

- The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* claims that 'Ali (ﷺ) said to the Muhâjireen: "I urge you by Allah, O Muhâjireen, not to take the authority of Muhammad among the Arabs out of his house and home to yours and not to deprive his family of their rights, for by Allah, O Muhâjireen, we are more entitled to that because we are Ahl al-Bayt (the members of the Prophet's household) and are more entitled to this than you. By Allah, this is our right; do not follow whims and desires lest you go astray from the path of Allah."[823] No one believes that the caliphate is the hereditary right of Ahl al-Bayt except the Shia.
- The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* harshly criticises the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. He depicts Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) as a coward and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ as jealous; he says that Muhammad ibn Maslamah got angry with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib because he killed the Jew Marḥab in Khaybar, and that 'Â'ishah ordered that 'Uthmân be killed.[824] Criticism of the Companions is one of the most well-known characteristics of the Râfiḍis; the Kharijites do something similar, but they do not criticise the majority of the Companions.[825]

- The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* says that al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd was killed by Muṣ'ab ibn az-Zubayr because he called people to rally behind the household of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but he neglects to mention the myths introduced by al-Mukhtâr or his claim of receiving revelation.[826] The Râfiḍis are the ones who love al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd because he took revenge on the murderers of al-Ḥusayn. It should also be noted that Ibn Qutaybah (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned al-Mukhtâr among those who rebelled against legitimate authority, and he said that al-Mukhtâr used to claim that Jibreel (ﷺ) came down to him.[827]

- The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* wrote only about twenty-five pages concerning the caliphates of the three caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân, whereas he wrote two hundred pages about the fitnah that occurred among the Companions. In other words, he reduced the greatest period of history to a few pages but wrote pages upon pages of false history, of which nothing is proven except a little. This is one of the known attributes of the Râfiḍis. We seek refuge with Allah (ﷻ) from misguidance and betrayal.

- As-Sayyid Maḥmoud Shukri al-Aloosi says in *Mukhtaṣar al-Fitnah al-Ithna 'Ashariyyah*: "Part of their (the Râfiḍis') crafty tricks is that they look at the names of scholars who are respected by Ahl as-Sunnah, and whenever they find one who has the same name as one of their own scholars, they attribute the reports of that Shia scholar to him (the Sunni scholar). Those Sunnis who are unaware of this will think that this is one of their (Sunni) imams and will accept his words and rely on his reports. For example, as-Suddi is the name of two men, one of whom is as-Suddi the elder and the other is as-Suddi the younger. The elder as-Suddi is one of the trustworthy Sunni scholars, whereas

the younger is one of the fabricators and liars and is an extreme Râfiḍi. Abdullah ibn Qutaybah is an extreme Râfiḍi whereas Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah is a trustworthy Sunni scholar who wrote a book called *al-Ma'ârif*; that Râfiḍi wrote a book which he also called *al-Ma'ârif*, with the aim of misleading people."[828] This is what makes it likely that the book *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* was written by the Râfiḍi Ibn Qutaybah and not by the trustworthy Sunni Ibn Qutaybah; people got confused by the similarity of names.[829] And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

3.7.2. Nahj al-Balâghah

One of the books that played a role in distorting the history of the Companions is the book called *Nahj al-Balâghah*. This book is faulty in terms of both its chains of narration and its text. It was compiled three and a half centuries after 'Ali (ﷺ) died, without any chain of narration. The Shia attributed *Nahj al-Balâghah* to ash-Shareef ar-Raḍiy, who was not accepted by the hadith scholars even when he gave a chain of narrators, in cases where the reports support his innovations, so how about if no chain of narration is given at all, as is the case in *Nahj al-Balâghah*? As for the one whom the scholars accused of lying, that is his brother 'Ali.[830] The scholars discussed him and said:

— Ibn Khallikân said in *Tarjamat ash-Shareef al-Murtaḍiy*: "The scholars differed concerning the book *Nahj al-Balâghah*, which is a compilation of the words of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), as to whether it was compiled by 'Ali or his brother ar-Raḍiy. It was said that these were not the words of 'Ali; rather that the one who compiled it and attributed it to him was the one who fabricated it. And Allah knows best."[831]

— Adh-Dhahabi said: "The one who studies *Nahj al-Balâghah* will be certain that it is falsely attributed to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali

(ﷺ). It contains blatant insults and criticism of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) as well as contradictions, and is written in a weak and pallid style such that anyone who knows anything about the Qurayshi Companions and those who came after them, and their way of thinking, will be certain that most of it is false."[832]

— Ibn Taymiyah said: "The scholars know that most of the speeches in this book are fabricated and falsely attributed to 'Ali (ﷺ), hence we do not find most of it in earlier books, and it has no known chain of transmission."[833]

— Ibn Ḥajar accuses ash-Shareef al-Murtaḍiy of fabricating it and says: "The one who studies it will be certain that it is falsely attributed to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), and most of it is false."[834]

Based on the above comments and others, a number of researchers discussed this topic and said that this book cannot be soundly attributed to Imam 'Ali (ﷺ).[835]

We may note some of the most important reasons why the early and modern scholars doubted the attribution of *Nahj al-Balâghah* to Imam 'Ali:

❖ It is devoid of documented chains of narration that would support the attribution of its words to 'Ali.

❖ It contains a large number of lengthy speeches, which would have been difficult to memorise without getting mixed up at that time, before the era of compiling and writing things down. Even the speeches of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) have not reached us in complete form, despite the great deal of care and attention given to them.

❖ We can see many of its statements and speeches in trustworthy

sources where thay are attributed to someone other than 'Ali (ﷺ), but the author of *Nahj al-Balâghah* attributes them to him.

- This book contains words that criticise the Rightly Guided Caliphs who preceded 'Ali, in a manner that is not befitting him or them; these words contradict what is known about 'Ali's respect for them. One example is the report of the speech known as Shaqshaqiyyah, in which his keenness to become caliph is demonstrated, even though he was known to be an ascetic who cared little about worldly matters.
- The prevalence of rhymed prose in the book. A number of literary critics think that so much rhymed prose is not in accordance with the spirit of 'Ali's era, when people sought to avoid overdoing things, even though the kind of rhymed prose that comes without much effort was not far removed from the spirit of that time.
- Writing in a very ornate manner, which is a demonstration of literary ability. This is a feature of the 'Abbasid era, with its love of flowery speech such as we find in the description of peacocks, bats, bees, ants, plants, clouds and so on.
- The philosophical style that is scattered throughout the book was unknown to the Muslims until the third century AH, when Greek, Persian and Indian books were translated. This is more like the words of the philosophers and orators than the words of the Companions and the Rightly Guided Caliphs.[836]

We should beware of this book when talking about the Companions and what happened between them and Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). We should measure its texts against Qur'an and Sunnah; whatever is in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, there is nothing wrong with referring to it, but whatever is contrary to them, we should pay no attention to it.

3.7.3. *Al-Aghâni* by al-Isfahâni

The book *al-Aghâni* by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahâni is regarded as a book of literature, entertainment and poetry that is to be sung; it is not a book of knowledge, history and Islamic jurisprudence. It is very famous in the realm of literature and history, but that does not mean that we should keep quiet about what is mentioned in it of *shu'oobiyyah*,[837] fabrication, blatant lies, slander and criticism. The Iraqi poet, Professor Waleed al-A'dhami, has written a valuable book called *as-Sayf al-Yamâni fi Naḥr al-Isfahâni Ṣâḥib al-Aghâni*, in which he makes a serious effort to distinguish between what is rubbish and what may be accepted, what is poison and what is honey. He highlights what the book contains of lies, inflammatory shu'oobiyyah and hatred, which seethes in the heart like a boiling cauldron. He refutes the false and unauthenticated reports that al-Isfahâni compiled, which undermine the people of the Prophet's household and distort their history and their image. He also discusses the false claims made by al-Isfahâni with regard to Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân and the Umayyad Rightly Guided Caliphs, as well as the reports that are fabricated and falsely attributed to them. In this valuable book, the great scholar and poet Professor Waleed al-A'dhami also discusses other kinds of falsehood, including the fabricated stories that undermine Islamic belief and religion and give precedence to ignorance over Islam.[838]

The early scholars commented on Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahâni:

— Al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi said: "Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahâni was the worst of liars; he used to buy a lot of worthless books, then all that he wrote was based on them."[839]

— Ibn al-Jawzi said: "The reports of such a man cannot be trusted, and you will find in his books evidence to prove that he is an evildoer. He encourages the drinking of

alcohol and may even attribute that to himself. The one who studies the book *al-Aghâni* will see all kinds of evils."[840]

— Adh-Dhahabi said: "I saw our Shaykh Ibn Taymiyah classifying him as weak, criticising him with regard to his reports and finding what was in his book outrageous."[841]

3.7.4. *Tareekh al-Ya'qoobi*

The author's full name is Aḥmad ibn Abi Ya'qoob Isḥâq ibn Ja'far ibn Wahb ibn Wâḍiḥ. He was from Baghdad, and he died in the year 290 AH. He was an Imami Shia historian who worked as a scribe in the ministries of the Abbasid state, so he was known as 'the Abbasid scribe'. Al-Ya'qoobi presented the history of the Islamic state from a purely Imami Shia point of view. He did not acknowledge the caliphate of anyone except 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib and his sons (may Allah be pleased with them), in the sequence of Imams accepted by the Shia, and he referred to 'Ali as the rightful, appointed heir of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). When he spoke of the caliphates of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them), he did not give them the title of caliph; rather he said: "So-and-so took charge." He did not mention any of them without reviling him. He narrated bad reports about 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) and treated other senior Companions in like manner, narrating corrupt reports about 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه)[842] and also about Khâlid ibn al-Waleed,[843] 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ[844] and Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân.[845] He discussed in a very negative light the meeting in which Abu Bakr was first given the oath of allegiance after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ),[846] claiming that it was a conspiracy to take the caliphate away from 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) who, in his view, was the rightful successor. His way of fabricating false accusations is typical of the way of his fellow Shia and Râfiḍis; it involves either fabricating the report altogether,[847] adding

something to the report,[848] or quoting it out of context to distort its meaning.

When he mentions the Umayyad caliphs, he describes them as kings, but when he mentions the Abbasid caliphs, he calls them caliphs. In his book *al-Buldân*, he also calls their state 'the blessed state',[849] which is a reflection of his hypocrisy and practice of taqiyyah (dissimulation). This book is an example of the deviation and distortion to be found in the writing of Islamic history, but it was used as a reference by many Orientalists and westernised Muslims who undermined Islamic history and the images of its figures. In fact, this book is worthless from an academic point of view; the first part is mostly filled with stories, myths and legends, and the second part is written from a partisan point of view. It is also lacking the simplest principles of academic authentication.[850]

3.7.5. Al-Mas'oodi (d. 345 AH)

The book *Murooj adh-Dhahab wa Ma'âdin al-Jawhar* was written by al-Mas'oodi, whose full name is Abu al-Ḥasan 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali al-Mas'oodi; he was one of the descendants of Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (ﷺ).[851] It was said that he was a man from 'the Maghreb',[852] but al-Mas'oodi himself stated that he was from Iraq and that he moved to Egypt.[853] If what was meant by 'the Maghreb' was the western part of the Arab world as opposed to the eastern part, then Egypt is part of the western part of the Muslim world, so there is no contradiction.[854]

Al-Mas'oodi was a Shia, of whom Ibn Ḥajar said: "His books are filled with proof that he was a Shia and Mutazilite."[855] Al-Mas'oodi argued that the concept of the rightful, appointed heir for the imamate was known and established from the time of Adam, and that it was transmitted from generation to generation until the time of our Messenger (ﷺ). Ibn Ḥajar mentioned the differences among the

people after that with regard to whether there is a divine text or it is to be left for people to choose, and the Imami Shia believe that there is a text.[856] In his book *Murooj adh-Dhahab*, Al-Mas'oodi paid a great deal of attention to the events surrounding 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ); he paid more attention to him than he did to the life of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the same book.[857] He focused his attention on the household of 'Ali (ﷺ) and followed reports on them very clearly in his book *Murooj adh-Dhahab*.[858] He tried shamelessly to distort the history of the first generation of Islam.

These are some of the classical books that we warn against, and which had a great impact on the writings of some contemporary authors such as Taha Hussein (*al-Fitnah al-Kubra — 'Ali wa Banuhu*) and al-'Aqqâd (*al-'Abqariyât* series). They quoted numerous fabricated and weak reports and based their analysis on them; hence they were mistaken in their conclusions and made serious errors concerning the Companions (ﷺ). The same is true of 'Abdul-Wahhâb an-Najjâr in his book *al-Khulafâ' ar-Râshideen*, where he quotes texts of the Râfiḍi reports from *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, and Ḥasan Ibrâheem in his book *'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ*, in which he concludes, on the basis of fabricated Râfiḍi reports, that 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ was a man in pursuit of his own interests and ambitions who would not get involved in any matter unless he could see some worldly interest or benefits for himself.[859] There are also other researchers who followed the same methodology and thus entered dark tunnels because of their being far removed from the methodology of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah when dealing with the huge accumulation of historical reports.

3.8. The Orientalists and Islamic history

One of the worst groups when it comes to distorting Islamic history is the Râfiḍi Shia, of all groups and types. They were among

the earliest of the groups to emerge, and they have a hierarchical political system and their own set of deviant beliefs and ideology. This is the group that tells the most lies against its opponents, and they are among the most vehemently opposed of people towards the Companions, as we will see. Among the basic foundations of their belief are impugning the Companions and denouncing them as disbelievers, especially the 'two shaykhs' Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), whom they refer to as 'sorcery and evil'.[860] The Shia have the greatest number of narrators and storytellers who took on the mission of spreading their lies and fabrications and compiling them in books and essays about the events of Islamic history, especially internal events. Shu'oobiyyah and tribalism also had an effect on the fabrication of historical reports and stories aimed at distorting Islamic history and 'proving' the superiority of one sect or people or race over another, ignoring the Sharia criterion of superiority, namely taqwa. ﴾Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that [believer] who has *At-Taqwa* [i.e. he is one of the *Muttaqoon* (the pious)]﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 13).*

The deviant sects took advantage of the prevalence of storytellers, the ignorance and lack of knowledge of the Sunnah on the part of most of the people, and the fact that some of them had drifted away from the truth while seeking to earn a living. They spread their lies and fabricated stories, which these storytellers welcomed and spread among the common folk, without realising the situation. Hundreds of fabricated reports about the Companions, Tâbi'oon and Muslim scholars, which undermined them and distorted their history, were disseminated through them. But by His grace and blessing, Allah (ﷻ) guided a number of scholarly critics, who strove hard to examine the narrators and narrations, distinguishing between true and false and defending the beliefs and history of the Ummah. The Sunni scholars put a great deal of effort

into pointing out the fabricated reports by quoting them and highlighting those narrators who were weak, suspicious, or followers of whims and desires. They drew up a methodology for examining the reports and determining which to accept, and they were successful in these efforts.

Among the most prominent of those who took on the mission of explaining historical errors and pointing out flaws in the false reports were: al-Qâḍi Ibn al-'Arabi in *al-'Awâṣim min al-Qawâṣim*; Imam Ibn Taymiyah in many of his books and essays, especially his valuable book *Minhâj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah fi Naqḍ Kalâm ash-Shia wal-Qadariyyah*; the critic adh-Dhahabi in many of his historical writings such as *Siyar A'lâm an-Nubala'*, *Tareekh al-Islam* and *Mizân al-I'tidâl fi Naqd ar-Rijâl*; al-Ḥâfidh[861] Ibn Katheer, the interpreter of Qur'an and historian, in his book *al-Bidâyah wan-Nihâyah*; al-Ḥâfidh Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqallâni in his books *Fatḥ al-Bâri fi Sharḥ Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhâri*, *Lisân al-Mizân*, *Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb* and *al-Iṣâbah fi Ma'rifat aṣ-Ṣaḥâbah*.

With regard to the methods used by the Shia to distort the historical events and images of the early generation of the Companions and Tâbi'oon, there were many ways, including:

- Outright fabrications and lies.
- Mentioning a true story or incident, but adding or omitting details so as to distort it and give the opposite idea.
- Quoting reports out of context, so that the meaning is distorted, and a false interpretation of events is given.
- Highlighting shortcomings and mistakes while concealing well-established facts.
- Fabricating poetry and attributing it to some poets, in order to support some so-called historical events, because

Arabic poetry is regarded as a historical document and proof that helps to authenticate reports.

- Fabricating books and essays and falsely attributing them to scholars and well known characters, as the Râfiḍis fabricated the book *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah,* which they attributed to Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah ad-Daynoori because he was famous among and trusted by the Sunnis, as we have seen above.

In the last century, these lies and distortions were welcomed by Western scholars and writers, such as Orientalists and missionaries, during the period in which they invaded and colonised Muslim countries. They found in this material what they were looking for, and they started to highlight it and focus on it. Motivated by their fanaticism and hatred of the Muslims, they added lies by inventing events that never happened or misinterpreting historical events, purposely distorting and misinterpreting the facts to support their beliefs. This group was then supported by a large number of the students of the Orientalists from Arab and Muslim countries, who adopted their research methodology and their ideas and concepts for analysing and interpreting history; they took up the banner after the Europeans departed from the Muslim lands. Thus the harm that they did was worse and greater than that of their Orientalist teachers and their predecessors among the misguided and innovating groups. That is because they, like their teachers, claimed to be following a pure academic spirit and scientific method in research by giving up any and all preconceptions, but in fact most of them gave up nothing but their faith.

They had no sincerity towards the truth and no knowledge of following a sound academic methodology in proving historical events, such as comparing reports, knowing the value of the sources to which they were referring and the extent to which the narrators

were authentic and accurate, and studying the context of those narrators in terms of human nature and development.[862] They did not learn anything of scientific or academic methodology except for superficial matters such as how to write footnotes and put together bibliographies, and so on. This is probably what scientific methodology meant to them.[863] Muḥibb ad-Deen al-Khaṭeeb said: "Those who received a foreign education are controlled by the illusion that they are disconnected from that past, and their attitude towards its figures is like that of a public attorney towards the accused. Indeed, some of them even went to extremes to appear in front of others as if they had no connection with any part of Arab and Muslim history, following in the footsteps of the Orientalists with their suspicious views of the past. They have a sense of contentment and follow their whims and desires, at the time when fairness dictates that they should verify the matter, in order to reach a conclusion and feel at ease with it before they have enough evidence to prove it."[864]

One of the most important means by which the Orientalists and their students sought to distort the facts of Islamic history is:

Misinterpreting historical events on the basis of modern concepts and ideas and in accordance with whatever crossed their minds, without even verifying the historical events in the first place and without paying any attention to the historical context in which the event took place, the people's circumstances at that time, or the beliefs that were guiding them and that they were following. Before discussing any event, it is essential to first verify that it took place; the fact that it is mentioned in some book is not sufficient to prove it.[865] The stage of verifying precedes the stage of discussing and interpreting historical events.

The interpretation should also be in accordance with the wording of the historical report, as well as the context of the research and the general nature of the society, era and environment in which

the event took place. This interpretation of the historical event should not contradict another incident or series of incidents that are proven to have happened. Examination of an event should not be limited to one aspect only, as is the habit of many contemporary schools of thought when studying history; instead, all the factors that have an impact on the event should be scrutinised, especially ideological and intellectual factors. Even after paying attention to all of the above, the interpretation of historical events is no more than a human effort, which may be right or wrong. Some have given prominence to the history of misguided groups and tried to exaggerate their role, depicting them as reformers who were wronged or oppressed. They have tried to suggest that Muslim historians were unfair to groups like the Qarâmiṭah, Isma'ilis, Imâmi Râfiḍis, Fâtimids, Zanj, Ikhwân aṣ-Ṣafa and the Kharijites. In the view of these historians, all of these groups were advocates of reform, justice, freedom and equality, and their uprisings were aimed at putting an end to injustice and oppression.

This propaganda against Islamic history, and trying to crowd out the biographies of heroes and callers to Islam with the biographies of the leaders of misguided groups, is something that comes as no surprise from people who are not Muslims, because they are motivated by their own beliefs and aims to plot against Islam with all possible efforts by night and day, in secret and openly. One cannot expect people who have no faith and who belong to the disbelieving groups to do anything other than to support their brothers in misguidance.

What some may find strange however is that after the collapse of Orientalism, the banner of distortion was taken up by writers who have Muslim names and are Muslims, who tried to spread this poison among their fellow Muslims so as to divert the ignorant away from the straight path. These writers rely on dubious, weak, worthless

reports which they pick up from literature, fairy stories, folktales and weak or falsely attributed books. These books are what they use as proof, along with what they find of fabricated reports in aṭ-Ṭabari and al-Mas'oodi, even though they know that they are not regarded as reliable academic references. This transgression against and distortion of Islamic history — especially the history of the early generations — has been done by a number of means, namely:

(a) Choosing and focusing on particular events, such as battles and wars, and depicting them incorrectly so as to take away the idea of jihad for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), or focusing on events and internal turmoil with the aim of presenting the dispute among the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) as if it were a typical example of conflict and political scheming like those of modern times.

(b) Concealing and ignoring everything that could set a good example and motivate people.

(c) Shedding doubt by targeting history and its celebrated figures, as well as the Muslim historians themselves, and casting aspersions on their knowledge and authenticity.

(d) Fragmenting Islamic history into small, disparate parts as if there is no connection between them, such as dividing Islamic history on the basis of regions, race and so on.

All of these means are attempts to destroy our Islamic history and its beautiful features, and to prevent it from becoming a good example to follow and a means of sound education.

Hence the Muslim historians have to know about these things and be wary of them. They should also be aware of those who followed the Orientalists in their views and methodology, and they should not accept anything from them except with great caution. If

our scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) criticise many narrators of history and regard their reports as weak because they quote from the People of the Book and their Jewish and Christian sources, then we should be equally cautious in accepting the views and interpretations of those who learned from the Orientalists. As a matter of fact, we should reject and disregard them unless there is clear proof to support them.[866]

* * *

CHAPTER SEVEN
'Ali's attitude towards the Kharijites and Shia

1. The Kharijites

1.1. Origin and definition of the Kharijites

The scholars have defined the Kharijites in several ways. According to Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari, the name Kharijites was given to the group that rebelled against the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ). He said: "The reason why they are called Kharijites is because of their rebellion (*khurooj*) against 'Ali when he agreed to arbitration."[1]

Ibn Ḥazm stated that the name Kharijite applies to everyone who resembles the group that rebelled against 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) and who shares their beliefs. He said: "Whoever agreed with the Kharijites in rejecting the arbitration, regards anyone who commits a major sin as a disbeliever, says that the people should rebel against unjust rulers, believes that people who commit major sins will abide in hell forever, and thinks that the caliph may be other than a Qurayshi, is a Kharijite. If he differs with them with regard to other issues concerning which the Muslims differed, and he differs with them concerning the issues mentioned above, then he is not a Kharijite."[2]

Ash-Shahrastâni defined the Kharijites in general terms and for any era, saying: "Anyone who rebels against the rightful ruler of the Muslims, on whom they are agreed, is called a Kharijite, whether that rebellion took place at the time of the Companions against the Rightly Guided Caliphs or it happened after that against those who followed them in truth and the rulers of every era."[3]

Ibn Ḥajar said concerning them: "The Kharijites are those who objected to 'Ali (ﷺ) for appointing arbitrators, disavowed him and 'Uthmân and his descendants, and fought them. If they regard them as disbelievers, then they are extreme."[4] Giving another definition, he said: "The Kharijites are a rebellious group. They are innovators who were given this name because of their rebellion (khurooj) against Islam and against the best of the Muslims."[5]

Abu al-Ḥasan al-Malṭi thinks that the first Kharijite group was al-Muhakkimah, whose slogan was "There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah (ﷻ)." They said that when 'Ali (ﷺ) agreed to arbitration and gave Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari the authority to rule and judge, 'Ali (ﷺ) committed an act of disbelief, because there is no ruling except the ruling of Allah (ﷻ). The Kharijites were so called because of their rebellion (khurooj) against 'Ali (ﷺ) at the time of arbitration.[6]

Dr. Nâṣir al-'Aql says: "They are those who regard people as disbelievers for committing sins and those who rebel against unjust rulers."[7]

So the Kharijites are those people who rebelled against 'Ali (ﷺ) after he agreed to arbitration following the battle of Ṣiffeen. They have other names by which they are also known, such as the *Ḥarooriyyah*,[8] ash-Shurâh,[9] al-Mâriqah and *al-Muḥakkimah*.[10] They accepted all of these names except the name al-Mâriqah (the renegades); they did not accept that they were renegades from Islam who passed out of the faith as the arrow passes out of the prey.[11]

Some scholars suggest that the origins of the Kharijites go back to the time of the Messenger (ﷺ), and they recognise Dhul-Khuwayṣirah as the first of the Kharijites. He objected to the way the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) distributed some gold that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) had sent to him from Yemen. It is narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) that he said: " 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) sent to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) some gold from Yemen in a tanned leather bag that had not been purified of the earth clinging to it. He shared it out among four men: 'Uyaynah ibn Ḥaṣn, al-Aqra' ibn Ḥâbis, Zayd al-Khayl and the fourth, who was either 'Alqamah ibn 'Ulâthah or 'Âmir ibn aṭ-Ṭufayl. One of his companions said: 'We had more right to it than these men.' News of that reached the Prophet (ﷺ), who said: 'Do you not trust me, when I am the trustee of the One Who is above the heaven, and the news of heaven comes to me morning and evening?' A man with sunken eyes, prominent cheeks, a prominent forehead, a thick beard and shaven head stood up, tucking up his waist wrapper, and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, fear Allah!' He said: 'Woe to you! Am I not the one who should fear Allah the most among the people of earth?' Then the man turned and left, and Khâlid ibn al-Waleed (رضي الله عنه) said: 'O Messenger of Allah, should I not strike his neck (kill him)?' He said: 'No, perhaps he prays.' Khâlid said: 'How many of those who pray say with their tongues what is not in their hearts?' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'I have not been commanded to check people's hearts or split open their bellies (meaning checking what is in their hidden thoughts).' Then he looked at the man as he was going back, and he said: 'From among the progeny of this man will emerge people who recite the Book of Allah fluently, but it will not go any further than their throats. They will pass out of the faith as an arrow passes out of the prey.' He [the narrator] said: I think he said: 'If I live to see them, then I will certainly kill them like the killing of Thamood.' "[12]

Ibn al-Jawzi said, commenting on this hadith: "The first of the Kharijites, and the worst of them, was Dhul-Khuwayṣirah at-Tameemi. According to one version, he said to the Prophet (ﷺ), 'Be fair,' and the Prophet (ﷺ) replied: 'Woe to you! Who will be fair if I am not fair?'[13] This was the first Kharijite to rebel in Islam. His problem was that he was content with his own opinion, but if he had thought carefully, he would have realised that no opinion could supersede that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The followers of this man are those who fought 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه)."[14]

Among those who suggested that Dhul-Khuwayṣirah was the first of the Kharijites were Abu Muhammad ibn Ḥazm[15] and ash-Shahrastâni, in his book *al-Milal wan-Niḥal*.[16] Some scholars think that the Kharijites originated at the time of the rebellion against 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), when they stirred up the fitnah that led to his being killed wrongfully and unlawfully; the unrest that they stirred up was called 'the first fitnah'.[17] The commentator on *at-Taḥḥâwiyyah* said: "The Kharijites and the Shia emerged during the first fitnah."[18] Ibn Katheer labelled as Kharijites the thugs who rebelled against and killed 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), and he said when discussing them after their slaying of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه): "The Kharijites came and seized the wealth of the public treasury, in which there was a great deal of wealth."[19]

The most correct opinion about the origins of the Kharijites, despite the strong connections between Dhul-Khuwayṣirah and the thugs who rebelled against 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) on the one hand, and the Kharijites who rebelled against 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) because of the arbitration on the other, is that this terminology — in the most accurate sense of the word — can only be applied to those who rebelled because of the arbitration. They were an organised group who formed a sect with its own political inclinations and views, and the group had a clear ideological and intellectual impact, which was not the case in the previous incidents.[20]

1.2. Hadiths which criticise the Kharijites

There are many hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) which criticise the renegade Kharijites; they are described in these hadiths as having the most reprehensible characteristics, which make them the worst of people. Among the hadiths in which they are criticised is that which was narrated by the two shaykhs (Bukhari and Muslim) in their *Ṣaḥeeḥs* from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه): "While we were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and he was sharing out some wealth, Dhul-Khuwayṣirah, a man from Banu Tameem, came and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, be fair!' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Woe to you! Who will be fair if I am not fair? I will be doomed and lost if I am not fair.' 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) said: 'O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to strike his neck.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Let him be, for he has companions in comparison to whose prayer one of you would regard his prayer as insignificant, and he would regard his fasting as insignificant in comparison to their fasting. They recite the Qur'an, but it does not go any further than their collarbones. They will pass out of Islam as an arrow passes out of the prey; when he looks at the tip of it, there is nothing on it; then he looks at the sinews (which tie the arrowhead to the shaft), and there is nothing on them; then he looks at its base, and there is nothing on it; then he looks at its feathers, and there is nothing on them, because it has gone too fast to be smeared with excrement or blood. Their sign will be a black man, one of whose upper arms will be like a woman's breast or like a piece of quivering flesh. They will emerge when there is division among the people.'" Abu Sa'eed said: "I bear witness that I heard this from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and I bear witness that 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) fought them when I was with him. He ordered that that man be sought, and he was found and brought. I looked at him and saw that he was just as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had described him."[21]

The two shaykhs (Bukhari and Muslim) also narrated from Abu Salamah and 'Ata' ibn Yasâr that they came to Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri and asked him about the Ḥarooriyyah, saying: "Did you hear the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mention them?" He said: "I do not know who the Ḥarooriyyah are, but I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'There will emerge among this Ummah' — and he did not say: from them — 'people in comparison to whose prayer you will regard your prayer as insignificant. They will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go any further than their throats. They will pass out of Islam like an arrow passes out of the prey; then the archer looks at his arrow, at its tip and at its end and its notch, wondering whether there are any traces of blood on it.'"[22]

Bukhari narrated that Usayd ibn 'Amr said: "I said to Sahl ibn Ḥunayf: 'Did you hear the Prophet (ﷺ) say anything about the Kharijites?' He said: 'I heard him say, pointing towards Iraq: "There will emerge from it people who recite the Qur'an, but it does not go any further than their collarbones. They will pass out of Islam as the arrow passes out of the prey."'"

In these three hadiths, there is clear condemnation of the Kharijites. The Prophet (ﷺ) described them as a group of renegades who will be inappropriately strict in religion; in fact, they will pass out of it, meaning that they will enter it and then leave it quickly, and no part of it will adhere to them. The first of these hadiths also says that they will fight the group that is in the right, that the group that is in the right will destroy them, and that among them will be a man whose arm is like such and such. All of that happened as foretold by the Prophet (ﷺ).

With regard to the words "it does not go any further than their collarbones," there are two interpretations. It may mean that they do not understand it with their hearts, so they interpret it in a way that was not meant, or it may mean that their recitation will not be taken up to Allah (ﷻ).[23]

One of their blameworthy characteristics, for which the Messenger (ﷺ) criticised them, is that all they have of faith is mere lip service. Because their reasoning is weak and poor, and their understanding is incorrect, they recite Qur'an and think that it supports them, when in fact it is against them. Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "If I narrate to you a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), by Allah, being dropped from heaven would be dearer to me than telling a lie about him. But if I tell you of something that is between me and you, then war is deceit, and I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'There will emerge some people at the end of time[24] who are young in age, feebleminded and foolish. They will quote from the best of words, but their faith will go no further than their throats, and they will pass out of Islam as the arrow passes out of the prey.'"[25]

In these two hadiths, the Kharijites are criticised for having mere words instead of true faith. The first hadith indicates that their belief is verbal only and that they do not believe in their hearts.[26] In the latter hadith, which was narrated by Zayd ibn Wahb al-Juhani from 'Ali (ﷺ), the word 'faith' refers to prayer. Both hadiths indicate that their faith is a matter of words only, and that it goes no further than their throats or collarbones. This is the worst criticism.[27]

Another of the reprehensible characteristics for which the Prophet (ﷺ) criticised them is that they will pass out of Islam and will never be guided to return to it, and he said that they are the worst of creation. Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated from Abu Dharr (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "After me, there will be among my Ummah people who recite the Qur'an, but it does not go any further than their throats. They will pass out of the faith as an arrow passes out of the prey, then they will not return to it. They are the most evil of mankind and of all creation."[28] He narrated from Abu Sa'eed that the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned some people among his

Ummah who would rebel as a group, and whose characteristic feature was that they would have shaven heads. He said: "They are the most evil of mankind — or among the most evil of mankind — and they will be killed by the group that is closer to the truth."

Another of the characteristics for which they were condemned by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is that they are the most hated of creation to Allah. It is narrated in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* from 'Ubaydullah ibn Abi Râfi', the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), that he was with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) when the Ḥarooriyyah rebelled. They said: "There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah." 'Ali said: "These are true words being used for false purposes.[29] The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) described some people, and I recognise their characteristics in these people: 'They will speak the truth on their lips, but it will not go any further than this,' — and he pointed to his throat — 'and they are the most hated of Allah's creation to Him. Among them will be a black man, one of whose arms is like the teat of a sheep or a nipple.'" When 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) killed them, he said: "Look (for that man)." They looked but did not find anything. He told them two or three times: "Go back, for by Allah, I did not lie, nor was I lied to." Then they found the man in a ruin, and they brought him and placed him before 'Ali (ﷺ). 'Ubaydullah said: "I was present when that happened, and 'Ali said that to them."[30]

Another of the blameworthy characteristics for which they were criticised by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was that they were deprived of knowing the truth and being guided to it.[31] Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, in the hadith of Usayd ibn 'Amr from Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Some people from the east, who have shaven heads, will be misguided."[32] An-Nawawi said that this means that they will go astray from the right path and the path of truth.[33]

Another of the reprehensible characteristics that the Prophet (ﷺ) said would be manifested in them is that they regard it as a religious duty to kill the Muslims while they spare those who worship idols and the cross.[34] The two shaykhs (Bukhari and Muslim) narrated in their *Ṣaḥeeḥs* that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: "When he was in Yemen, 'Ali (ﷺ) sent some gold, still encased in earth, to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) shared it out among four men... There came a man with a thick beard, prominent cheeks, sunken eyes, a prominent forehead and a shaven head, who said: 'Fear Allah, O Muhammad!' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Who will obey Allah if I disobey Him? Would He trust me with the people of earth, but you do not trust me?' Then the man turned and left, and a man who was among the people asked for permission to kill him. (They think that he was Khâlid ibn al-Waleed.) Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Among the progeny of this man will be people who will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go any further than their throats. They will kill the people of Islam and leave the idol worshippers alone. They will pass through Islam as an arrow passes through the prey. If I live to see them, then I will certainly kill them like 'Âd.'"[35]

This prediction is a marvellous miracle of the Messenger (ﷺ) because they behaved as he foretold; they wielded their swords and killed the Muslims, but they spared the disbelievers — the Jews and Christians[36] — as we shall see below.

Another sign of the corruption of the Kharijites is reflected in the fact that the Messenger (ﷺ) encouraged killing them when they appeared. He said that if he lived to see them, he would eradicate them by killing them as 'Âd and Thamood were eradicated, and he said that the one who killed them would have a reward with Allah (ﷻ) on the Day of Resurrection. Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph, 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, the honour of

fighting and killing them, because they emerged during his reign as the Prophet (ﷺ) described them. 'Ali (ﷺ) went out to meet the Kharijites with the army that he had prepared to take to Syria; he attacked them at Nahrawân, and fewer than ten of them survived, as we shall see below. He did not fight them until they had shed blood that was protected by Sharia and attacked the property of the Muslims, then he fought them in order to defend against their aggression and because of what they had demonstrated of their evil actions and words.

The hadiths that we have quoted criticising the Kharijites are sufficient; there are so many hadiths criticising them that hardly any books of hadith are devoid of such reports.[37] We will discuss below how they started to gather in Ḥaroora', how Ibn 'Abbâs debated with them, and how Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was keen to enlighten and guide them, as well as the reasons for the battle of Nahrawân and its consequences. We will also discuss the basic beliefs of the Kharijites and whether Kharijite thought still exists among people, what its causes are and how it should be dealt with.

1.3. The gathering of the Kharijites in Ḥaroora' and the debate of Ibn 'Abbâs with them

The Kharijites split in a large group from 'Ali's army on the way back from Ṣiffeen to Kufah. According to one report, they numbered more than ten thousand; other reports put the number at twelve thousand,[38] eight thousand[39] or fourteen thousand.[40] There is also a report saying that they were twenty thousand,[41] but this report was narrated without any chain of transmission.[42] These people split from the army in several stages before reaching Kufah, which was a cause of worry and alarm for the companions of 'Ali (ﷺ). The caliph marched to Kufah with those in his army who remained loyal

to him. 'Ali (ﷺ) became preoccupied with the Kharijite issue, especially after he heard about them organising their group by appointing one man to lead the prayers and another man to lead the fighting. Their view that allegiance was to be given to Allah (ﷻ), as well as their emphasis on enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, meant a practical split from the main body of the Muslims.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was also keen to bring them back to the main body of Muslims, so he sent Ibn 'Abbâs to debate with them. Ibn 'Abbâs himself narrated what happened: "I went out to them wearing the best suit that Yemen had to offer, and I entered upon them in a house in the middle of the day." Ibn 'Abbâs was a handsome and good-looking man. "They said: 'Welcome, O Ibn 'Abbâs; what is this suit?' I said: 'Why are you criticising me? I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wearing the best kind of suit, and the words ﴾Say [O Muhammad]: Who has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allah, which He has produced for His slaves, and *At-Tayyibât* [all kinds of *Halâl* (lawful) things] of food?﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 32)* were revealed.'

"They said: 'What brings you here?' I said: 'I have come to you from the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, and from the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (ﷺ), among whom the Qur'an was revealed and who have more knowledge of its interpretation than you. None of them is among you, so I need to convey to you what they are saying and to convey to them what you are saying.' A group of people took me aside, and I said: 'Tell me what you are upset about with regard to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his cousin.' They said: 'There are three things.' I said: 'What are they?' They said: 'Firstly, he left the judgement or decision to men concerning a matter of religion, and Allah says: ﴾The decision is only for Allah.﴿ *(Qur'an 6: 57)*. What does man have to do with decisions and ruling?'

"I said: 'This is one; what is the second?' They said: 'He fought and did not take the womenfolk of his opponents captive or take any booty. If they are disbelievers, we should be allowed to take their womenfolk captive; if they are believers, it is not permissible to take their womenfolk captive or to fight them.'

"I said: 'This is the second; what is the third?' They said: 'He erased his title of Amir al-Mu'mineen [in the arbitration document]. If he is not the leader of the believers, then he is the leader of the disbelievers.' I said: 'Do you have anything else?' They said: 'That is all.' I said to them: 'If I bring evidence to you from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His prophet (ﷺ) to answer your questions, do you think that you will recant?' They said: 'Yes.'

"I said: 'With regard to what you said about him leaving the judgement or decision to men concerning a matter of religion, I shall recite to you from the Book of Allah to show that Allah delegated His ruling and decision to men with regard to something worth one-quarter of a dirham, and Allah (ﷻ) instructed them to issue a ruling concerning it. Do you not see that Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O you who believe, kill not the game while you are in a state of iḥrâm [for hajj or 'umrah (pilgrimage)], and whosoever of you kills it intentionally, the penalty is an offering, brought to the Ka'bah, of an eatable animal [i.e. sheep, goat, cow] equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you﴾ *(Qur'an 5: 95)*? This verse refers to something concerning which men are to judge. I adjure you by Allah, is the ruling or decision of men with regard to reconciling between people and sparing their blood more important than the ruling on a rabbit?' They said: 'Yes, this is more important.'

"I said: 'Concerning a woman and her husband, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If you fear a breach between them twain [the man and his wife], appoint [two] arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers﴾ *(Qur'an 4: 35)*. I adjure you by Allah, is the ruling or

decision of men to bring reconciliation between people and spare their blood more important than their ruling or decision concerning a woman and her husband? Have I answered this point?' They said: 'Yes.'

"I said: 'With regard to your saying that he fought and did not take the women captive or take any booty, would you take your mother 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) captive and regard (intimacy with) her as permissible like any other woman, when she is your mother? If you say, "We regard (intimacy with) her as permissible like any other woman," then you have become disbelievers, and if you say, "She is not our mother," you have become disbelievers. ﴾The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their [believers'] mothers [as regards respect and marriage].﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 6)*. Either way, it is misguidance, so how could you answer this? Have I answered your point?' They said: 'Yes.'

"I said: 'As for your saying that he has erased the title of Amir al-Mu'mineen, I shall quote to you something that you will accept. On the day of Ḥudaybiyah, the Prophet made a treaty with the polytheists. He said: "O 'Ali, write: This is what was agreed by Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah." They (the disbelievers of Quraysh) said: "If we accepted that you were the Messenger of Allah, we would not have fought you." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Erase it, O 'Ali. O Allah, You know that I am the Messenger of Allah. Erase it, O 'Ali, and write: 'This is what was agreed by Muhammad ibn Abdullah.'" By Allah, the Messenger of Allah is better than 'Ali, and he erased it. Erasing this title does not mean that he gave up prophethood. Have I answered this point?' They said: 'Yes.'

"Two thousand of them recanted, but the rest of them continued their rebellion and fought on the basis of their misguidance, and the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr killed them."[43]

We can learn a number of lessons from the debate of Ibn 'Abbâs with the Kharijites:

1.3.1. Making a good selection when choosing the one who is going to debate with opponents

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) chose his cousin Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, who was a scholar of the Ummah and an interpreter of the Qur'an. The people he was going to debate were known for being well-versed in the Qur'an; they relied for their guidance on the Qur'an and the way they interpreted it, so the one who was most qualified to debate with them was the one who was most knowledgeable of the Qur'an and its interpretation. We might say that Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) was the one who was specialised in this kind of debate, because of his sincere intention towards Allah (ﷻ), his shunning of whims and desires, his patience and forbearance, his deliberation, his gentle approach to his opponents, his ability to listen properly to all opponents and avoid getting into arguments, and the clarity of his proof and the strength of his evidence.

1.3.2. Starting the debate by noting the points that are agreed upon

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) and his opponents, the Kharijites, were agreed on adhering to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Hence Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said to them: "If I bring evidence to you from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His prophet (ﷺ) to answer your questions, do you think that you will recant?" In this way, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) tried to get agreement with them on this issue before starting the debate.

1.3.3. Knowing what arguments the opponents have

Knowing the opponents' arguments, having a complete list of them and being prepared before starting the debate, is important. We assume that before the debate with them, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) knew their arguments and discussed with his companions how to answer them.

1.3.4. Refuting the opponents' claims one after another

This is done so that they will not have a leg to stand on, as is clear from the words of Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) in his debate with them. Every time he finished refuting one point, he said: "Have I answered this point?"

1.3.5. Before starting the debate, saying something that helps to reach the right conclusion for the sake of truth

Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) said at the beginning, before the debate: "I have come to you from the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, and from the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (ﷺ), among whom the Qur'an was revealed and who have more knowledge of its interpretation than you. None of them is among you..."[44]

1.3.6. Showing respect for the views of the opponents during the debate

This is so that they will be more inclined to listen to and respect whatever he has to say. This is what we see in the debate between Ibn 'Abbâs and the Kharijites.[45]

1.3.7. Allah guided thousands of those people

The number of Kharijites who were present at the battle of Nahrawân was fewer than four thousand, as we shall see below. They realised the truth, and their confusion was dispelled by the grace of Allah and by what Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما) had been given of knowledge, strength of argument and the ability to explain things clearly. The falseness of their argument became clear to them by means of proper interpretation of the verses on which they were basing their arguments, and by means of the Sunnah of the Prophet, which explains the meanings of the noble Qur'an.[46]

1.3.8. The words of Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما): "None of them is among you"

This is a clear statement on the part of Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما) that not one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was with them, and none of the Kharijites disputed that fact. This report is sound and proven. As far as I know, there is no one among the Sunni scholars who said that any of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were with the Kharijites. As for the claims that some of the Companions were with the Kharijites, that is the claim of the Kharijites themselves, but they have no documented academic proof for what they say.

1.3.9. Defining the reference point (for solving the problem)

Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما) said: "If I bring evidence to you from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His prophet (ﷺ) to answer your questions, do you think that you will recant?" They said yes.

These words of Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما) offer an important lesson, which is that the reference point with the debaters should be defined so that it will be possible to reach a sound outcome to the debate.

1.4. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) goes out to debate with the remainder of the Kharijites, and his policy on dealing with them after they came back to Kufah then rebelled again

After the debate of Ibn 'Abbâs with the Kharijites, in which two thousand of them responded to him, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) himself went out to them to speak to them, and they came back to Kufah. This period of calm did not last long, though. The Kharijites understood from 'Ali (ﷺ) that he had changed his mind about arbitration and had repented for his mistake, as they saw it, and they began to broadcast this claim among the people. Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindi came to 'Ali and said to him: "The people are saying that you have recanted disbelief for them." 'Ali (ﷺ) gave a sermon on the next Friday in which he praised and glorified Allah (ﷻ) and reminded them how they had split from the people and the issue over which they had split from him.[47]

According to one report, a man stood up and said: "There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah." Then another one stood up and said the same thing, then others stood up in different parts of the mosque repeating the same slogan. He gestured with his hand for them to sit down and said: "Yes, there is no ruling except the ruling of Allah. This is a word of truth intended for a false purpose. I am waiting for the ruling of Allah concerning you."[48] From the minbar, he started gesturing for them to be quiet, but some of them started putting their fingers in their ears and saying: ﴾If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers﴿ *(Qur'an 39: 65)*. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) responded by saying: ﴾So be patient [O Muhammad]. Verily, the promise of Allah is true; and let not those who have no certainty of faith discourage you from conveying Allah's Message [which you are obliged to convey].﴿ *(Qur'an 30: 60)*.

Amir al-Mu'mineen announced his just policy towards this extremist group, telling them: We can grant you three things:

1. We will not prevent you from praying in this mosque.
2. We will not withhold your share of this fay' as long as you are with us.
3. We will not fight you unless you fight us.[49]

Amir al-Mu'mineen granted them these rights as long as they did not fight the caliph or rebel against the main body of the Muslims; at the same time, they could maintain their own interpretation within the framework of Islamic belief. Initially, he did not regard them as being outside of Islam, so he granted them the right to be different without that leading to division or fighting.[50]

Amir al-Mu'mineen did not throw the Kharijites in jail or send spies against them or limit their freedom, but he was keen to establish proof and show the truth to them and to others who might be deceived by their views and pious appearance. He instructed the muezzin to let the pious worshippers come to him but not to admit anyone who had not memorised the Qur'an; thus the house was filled with people who had memorised the Qur'an. He called for a large muṣḥaf and started tapping it with his hand, saying: "O muṣḥaf, tell the people." The people called out: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, how can you ask it? It is only ink and paper, but we can speak on the basis of what we understand from it."

He said: "These companions of yours who rebelled, between them and me is the Book of Allah, and Allah says in His Book concerning a woman and her husband: ﴾If you fear a breach between them twain [the man and his wife], appoint [two] arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 35)*. The Ummah of Muhammad is more important with regard to life and sanctity than a woman and her husband.

"They got angry with me when I wrote, on a document between Mu'âwiyah and me, ''Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib' [without adding the title 'Amir al-Mu'mineen']. But we were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when he made a peace deal with Quraysh at Ḥudaybiyah, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) dictated, 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.' Suhayl ibn 'Amr said: 'Do not write, "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."' The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'What should I write?' Suhayl said: 'Write: "In Your name, O Allah."' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Write it,' so I wrote it. He said: 'Write: "This is what was agreed by Muhammad the Messenger of Allah."' Suhayl said: 'If I accepted that you were the Messenger of Allah, I would not have opposed you.' So he wrote: 'This is what was agreed by Muhammad ibn Abdullah with Quraysh.' And Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Indeed in the Messenger of Allah [Muhammad] you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for [the Meeting with] Allah and the Last Day﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 21).*[51]

When the Kharijites became certain that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was determined to send Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (رضي الله عنه) as an arbitrator, they asked him to give up this idea. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) refused to do so. He explained to them that this could be regarded as a betrayal and breaking of a covenant and promise, since a covenant had been drawn up with the people, and Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And fulfil the Covenant of Allah [*Bai'ah*: pledge for Islam] when you have covenanted, and break not the oaths after you have confirmed them — and indeed you have appointed Allah your surety.﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 91).*

The Kharijites decided to split from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and appoint their own amir, or leader. They gathered in the house of Abdullah ibn Wahb ar-Râsibi, who addressed them in an eloquent speech, reminding them of the insignificance of this world

and encouraging them to seek the hereafter and paradise. He urged them to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; then he said: "Let us leave this town, whose people are wrongdoers, and go to the villages in the mountains or some of these towns, objecting to these unjust rules." Then Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr stood up and said, after praising Allah (ﷻ): ﴾The conveniences of this world are few, and soon one will depart from it, so its adornments or pleasures should not make you want to stay in it or distract you from seeking truth and opposing wrongdoing. 'Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him [keep their duty unto Him], and those who are *Muhsinoon* [good-doers]'﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 128).* Ḥamzah ibn Sinân al-Asadi said: "O people, what you say is right and you speak the truth, so appoint a man from among you to be in charge, for you need a leader and a banner to rally behind and refer to." They sent word to Zayd ibn Ḥuṣn aṭ-Ṭâ'i, who was one of their prominent figures, and offered him the position of leader, but he refused. Then they offered it to Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr, then to Ḥamzah ibn Sinân, then to Shurayḥ ibn Abi Awfa al-'Absi; they all refused. They offered it to Abdullah ibn Wahb ar-Râsibi, and he accepted it, saying: "By Allah, I am not accepting it for worldly reasons, and I will never give it up for fear of death."[52]

They also gathered in the house of Zayd ibn Ḥuṣn aṭ-Ṭâ'i as-Sanbeesi, who addressed them and urged them to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. He recited verses of Qur'an to them, including:

﴾O Dâwood [David]! Verily, We have placed you as a successor on the earth; so judge you between men in truth [and justice] and follow not your desire — for it will mislead you from the path of Allah. Verily, those who wander astray from the path of Allah [shall] have a severe torment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.﴿

(Qur'an 38: 26)

﴾And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the *Kâfiroon* [i.e. disbelievers — of a lesser degree as they do not act on Allah's Laws].﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 44)*

﴾And whosoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers — of a lesser degree].﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 45)*

﴾And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, [then] such [people] are the *Fâsiqoon* [the rebellious, i.e. disobedient (of a lesser degree)] to Allah.﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 47)*

Then he said: "I bear witness against our people who turn to the same qiblah as us, that they have followed their whims and desires and rejected the ruling of the Qur'an and done wrong in word and deed. Fighting them is the duty of the believers." A man named Abdullah ibn Shajarah as-Sulami wept, then he urged those who were with him to fight the people, saying: "Strike their faces and foreheads with the sword until the Most Gracious, Most Merciful is obeyed. If you prevail and Allah is obeyed as you want, He will give you the reward of those who obey Him and follow His commands. If you fail, what is better than ending up with the pleasure of Allah and His paradise?"

Ibn Katheer said, after mentioning what Satan inspired them to say, as cited above: "These kinds of people are among the strangest of the sons of Adam. Glory be to the One Who created variety among people as He willed and decreed. How splendid are the words of one of the early generation concerning the Kharijites: They are the ones who are mentioned in the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Say [O Muhammad]: Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of [their] deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds. They are those who deny the Ayât [proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.] of their Lord and the Meeting with Him [in the

hereafter]. So their works are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them.﴾ *(Qur'an 18: 103-105)*"

What is meant is that those ignorant people, who were misguided in both word and deed, agreed to rebel and split from the Muslims, to march to certain towns in order to gain control of them against the inhabitants' wishes and then fortify themselves there, then to send word to their brethren, and others of their ilk in Basra who shared the same opinions and beliefs, to come and join them there. Zayd ibn Ḥuṣn aṭ-Ṭâ'i said to them: "You cannot gain control of the cities, because armies are stationed there and will keep you out. Make an agreement with your brethren to meet at the bridge over the River Jookhi. Do not leave Kufah in groups; go out individually so that no one will pay any attention to you." They wrote an open letter to those who were following their path in Basra and elsewhere and sent word to them telling them to meet them at the river so that they could be united against other people.

Then they departed, sneaking out one by one, lest anyone realise and prevent them from leaving. They departed from among their fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, leaving behind all their relatives. In their ignorance and lack of knowledge, they believed that this would please the Lord of the heavens and earth. They did not realise that it was a serious mistake, an act of wrongdoing, and a major sin that would doom them to hell. They did not realise that it was something that had been made attractive to them by the accursed Satan, who had been cast out of heaven and who took our father Adam (ﷺ) and his progeny as enemies as long as their souls were still in their bodies. Some people realised what their children and brothers were up to, so they stopped them and rebuked them. Some of them turned back to righteousness and continued on that path, but others fled after that to join the Kharijites and thus were doomed until the Day of Resurrection. The rest went to the specified place and were

joined by those from Basra and elsewhere to whom they had written. They all met at Nahrawân and became powerful and strong.[53]

After the two arbitrators parted without reaching a deal, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) wrote to the Kharijites who were gathered in Nahrawân. He gave them the news and said: "...So come back to us, and let us march to fight the people of Syria." They refused to do that, saying: "Not until you testify that you committed an act of disbelief and repent," and 'Ali (ﷺ) refused to do that.[54] According to another report, they wrote to him saying: "You did not get angry for your Lord's sake; you got angry for your own sake. If you testify that you committed an act of disbelief and you turn to repentance, we will think about the issue between us; otherwise there is no deal between us, and Allah does not love the treacherous." When he read their letter, he despaired of them and thought that he should leave them alone and go with the people to Syria until he met them and fought them.[55]

The issue of the Kharijites regarding 'Ali (ﷺ) as a disbeliever and asking him to repent cannot be proven from these reports, but it is in accordance with Kharijite views regarding 'Ali and 'Uthmân as disbelievers and testing people with regard to that issue.[56]

1.5. The battle of Nahrawân, 38 AH

1.5.1. The cause of the battle

The conditions that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) had stipulated for the Kharijites stated that they should not shed blood, terrorise people, or engage in banditry by attacking people on the roads. If they committed any of these transgressions, then he would declare war on them. Since the Kharijites regarded those who disagreed with them as disbelievers, whose blood and wealth they thought were permissible for them, they started to shed the blood of

people whose lives were protected in Sharia. There are numerous reports that speak of them committing ḥarâm actions.

One sound report was narrated by an eyewitness who had been one of the Kharijites and later left them. He said: "I accompanied the people of the river (the Kharijites), then I turned against them, but I concealed that for fear that they might kill me. While I was with a group of them, we came to a village, and between us and the village was a river. A man came rushing out of the village in fear, dragging his upper garment, and they said to him: 'Have we scared you?' He said: 'Yes.' They said: 'Don't be scared.' I said: 'By Allah, they know this man, but I do not know him.' They said: 'Are you the son of Khabbâb, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?' He said: 'Yes.' They said: 'Do you have a hadith you can tell us from your father from the Prophet (ﷺ)?' He said: 'I heard him say that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) mention fitnah and say: "The one who is sitting at that time will be better than the one who is standing, and the one who is standing will be better than the one who is walking, and the one who is walking will be better than the one who is running. If you live to see that time, then be the slave of Allah who is killed."'

"They seized him and his slave woman and took them with them. One of them passed by a fruit that had fallen from a tree, and he took it and put it in his mouth. Another of them said: 'It is fruit that belongs to dhimmis; how can you regard it as permissible?' So the first man took it out of his mouth. Then they passed by a pig, and one of them struck it with his sword. Another of them said: 'It is a pig that belongs to a dhimmi; how can you regard it as permissible?'

"Abdullah ibn Khabbâb said: 'Shall I not tell you about what is more serious and ḥarâm than this?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Killing me.' They took him to the river and struck his neck, and I saw his blood flowing on the water like a shoelace thrown in the water, until it disappeared.[57] Then they called for the slave woman,

who was pregnant, and they slit her belly open. I never accompanied any people whose company was more abhorrent to me than them, and when I found an opportunity, I fled.'"[58]

This action spread fear among the people and showed the extent of their terror, as they slit open the belly of this woman and slaughtered Abdullah like a sheep. They did not stop there, though; they started threatening to kill people until some of their own number objected to what they were doing and said: "Woe to you! We did not leave 'Ali for this."[59]

Despite the evil atrocities committed by the Kharijites, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) did not hasten to fight them. Instead, he sent word to them telling them to hand over the killers so that the ḥadd punishment might be carried out on them. They responded with stubbornness and arrogance, saying: "All of us are killers."[60] He marched towards them in the month of Muḥarram in 38 AH, with the army that he had prepared to fight the people of Syria.[61] He camped on the western bank of the river of Nahrawân, and the Kharijites camped on the eastern bank, level with the city of Nahrawân.[62]

1.5.2. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) encourages his army to fight

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) realised that these people were the Kharijites whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had predicted would pass out of Islam. During their march towards them, he began to urge his companions to fight them. The hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about the Kharijites had an effect on the Companions and the followers of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). 'Ali (ﷺ) urged his army to start with these Kharijites, and he said: "O people, I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'There will emerge some people from my Ummah who will recite the Qur'an, and your recitation would seem insignificant in comparison to theirs, your prayer would

seem insignificant in comparison to theirs, and your fasting would seem insignificant in comparison to theirs. They will recite the Qur'an, thinking that it is in their favour, when in fact it is against them, and their prayer will not go any further than their collarbones. They will pass out of Islam as an arrow passes out of the prey.' If the army that encountered them knew what has been decreed for them on the lips of their Prophet (ﷺ), they would rely upon that action. The sign is that there is a man among them who has an upper arm but no forearm, and the end of his upper arm is like a nipple with white hairs. You will go to Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria, and you will leave these people to look after your families and wealth. By Allah, I believe that these are the people in question, for they have shed forbidden blood and raided the flocks of the people. So march forth, in the name of Allah."[63]

'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said on the day of Nahrawân: "I have been commanded to fight the renegades, and these are the renegades."[64]

The army was camped opposite the Kharijites, separated from them by the river of Nahrawân. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) ordered his army not to start the fighting until the Kharijites crossed the river towards the west. He sent his messengers, urging them by Allah to recant. He sent al-Bara' ibn 'Âzib (رضي الله عنه) to them, calling them for three days, but they refused.[65] Messengers kept coming and going until they killed his messengers and crossed the river.[66]

The Kharijites went so far that all hope of any reconciliation and avoiding bloodshed was lost. They stubbornly and arrogantly refused to come back to the truth and insisted on fighting, so Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) organised his army and prepared to fight.[67] He put Ḥajar ibn 'Adiyy in charge of the right flank; Shabath ibn Rab'i and Ma'qil ibn Qays ar-Riyâḥi in charge of the left flank; Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣâri in charge of the cavalry and Abu Qatâdah al-Anṣâri in charge of the infantry. Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah was put in charge

of the people of Madinah, who numbered some seven hundred. 'Ali (ﷺ) ordered Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣâri to raise a banner of safety for the Kharijites and to say to them: "Whoever comes to this banner will be safe; whoever goes to Kufah or al-Madâ'in will be safe. We are not after any of you except those who killed our brothers." Many of their groups left, some four thousand in total. There were no more than one thousand men who remained with Abdullah ibn Wahb ar-Râsibi to wage war on 'Ali (ﷺ). Zayd ibn Ḥuṣn aṭ-Ṭâ'i as-Sanbeesi was in charge of their right flank; Shurayḥ ibn Awfa was in charge of their left flank; Ḥamzah ibn Sinân was in charge of their cavalry; and Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr as-Sa'di was in charge of their infantry. They stood to confront 'Ali (ﷺ) and his companions.[68]

1.5.3. The outbreak of fighting

The Kharijites marched towards 'Ali (ﷺ). 'Ali (ﷺ) sent his cavalry ahead of his army, with the archers in front; the infantry marched behind the cavalry. He instructed his companions: "Do not fight until they start it."

The Kharijites came, saying: "There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah. Today is the day of departure to paradise." They charged at the cavalry whom 'Ali (ﷺ) had sent forth and scattered them, with some of 'Ali's cavalry moving to the right and some to the left. Then the archers started shooting their arrows and striking their faces. Some of the cavalry came back at them from the right and the left. The infantry started attacking them with spears and swords, smashing the Kharijites, who ended up trampled beneath the horses' feet. Their leaders, Abdullah ibn Wahb, Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr, Shurayḥ ibn Awfa and Abdullah ibn Sakhbarah as-Sulami were killed.[69] Abu Ayyoob said: "I stabbed one of the Kharijites with a spear, which came out through his back. I said to him: 'Receive the tidings of hell, O enemy of Allah!' He said: 'You will come to know which of us is more deserving of it.'"[70]

Many of the Kharijites withdrew from the fighting because of something they heard from their leader Abdullah ibn Wahb ar-Râsibi, which indicated that there was no certainty about their cause. When 'Ali (ﷺ) struck one of the Kharijites with his sword, the Kharijite said: "How beautiful it is to depart to paradise." Abdullah ibn Wahb commented: "I do not know whether it is to paradise or to hell."[71] A man from Banu Sa'd, whose name was Farwah ibn Nawfal al-Ashja'i, said: "I only joined them because I was impressed by that leader, but I could see that he was in doubt." So he withdrew with a number of his companions. Almost one thousand of them joined Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣâri, and the people started sneaking away.[72]

The battle was short and decisive, taking a brief period of time on 9 Ṣafar 38 AH.[73] This swift battle resulted in the deaths of large numbers among the Kharijite ranks and the exact opposite in the army of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). According to a report narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, and from Zayd ibn Wahb, the number of 'Ali's companions who were killed was only two.[74] According to another report with a reliable chain of narration, he said: "Of 'Ali's companions, twelve or thirteen were killed."[75] According to a sound report, Abu Majlaz[76] said: "Only nine of the Muslims — meaning the army of 'Ali — were killed. If you wish, you may go to Abu Barzah[77] and ask him, for he was there."[78] With regard to the number of Kharijites slain, the reports state that all of them were killed.[79] Al-Mas'oodi stated that a small number, no more than ten, managed to escape, after a crushing defeat.[80]

1.5.4. Dhul-Thadyah, or 'the deformed one', and the effect of his killing of the army of 'Ali (ﷺ)

There are different reports about the identity of Dhul-Thadyah; some of these reports are weak in terms of their chains of narration, and others are strong. In the hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ), there are

descriptions of Dhul-Thadyah. Some reports say that he was black skinned[81] or, according to one report, an Abyssinian. They say that he had a deformed arm, meaning that it was incomplete and short; it extended only from the shoulder to the elbow, with the forearm missing. At the end of the elbow, there was something that looked like a nipple, with some white hairs on it. The upper arm was not steady; it wobbled as if there was no bone in it.[82] With regard to this man's name, those who said that Dhul-Thadyah was Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr as-Sa'di were mistaken.[83] Ḥarqooṣ was a well-known man who played a role in the Islamic conquests. Later he rebelled against 'Uthmân (ﷺ), and he fled following the lesser Battle of the Camel, in which az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah killed the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) in Basra. Ḥarqooṣ became one of the prominent leaders of the Kharijites,[84] but it was narrated in one report that his name was Ḥarqoos and that his father was unknown. According to another report, his name was Mâlik, and they looked for him. When they found him, 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "*Allâhu akbar*. Is there anyone who can tell you who his father is?" The people started saying: "This is Mâlik, this is Mâlik." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Son of who?"[85] But no one knew.

According to a report classified as sound by aṭ-Ṭabari, his name was Nâfi' Dhul-Thadyah, as narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah and Abu Dâwood; their chains of narration are the same, and what is narrated in the three sources is regarded as three reports with one chain of narration.[86] 'Ali (ﷺ) had spoken of the Kharijites since the beginning of their innovation, and he frequently mentioned Dhul-Thadyah, describing him and stating that he was a sign of these people. After the end of the decisive battle, 'Ali (ﷺ) instructed his companions to look for the body of 'the deformed one', because the presence of his body would be one of the signs that 'Ali (ﷺ) was in the right and following the truth. After searching for a while, 'Ali (ﷺ) and his companions came to a heap of bodies piled one on top of the other on the riverbank. He said: "Bring them out." They found

the deformed man underneath all of them, lying directly on the ground. 'Ali (ﷺ) said, "*Allâhu akbar,*" then said: "Allah spoke the truth, and His Messenger conveyed it." He performed the prostration of thankfulness, and the people said *Allâhu akbar* and rejoiced when they saw him.[87]

1.5.5. 'Ali's treatment of the Kharijites

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) treated the Kharijites as Muslims, both before and after the battle. No sooner had the battle ended but he issued orders to his troops, saying: "Do not pursue anyone who is fleeing, do not finish off anyone who is wounded, and do not mutilate anyone who has been killed." Shaqeeq ibn Salamah, who was known as Abu Wâ'il, one of the jurists of the Tâbi'oon who was present with 'Ali during his battles, said: " 'Ali did not take any female prisoners either on the day of the Camel or on the day of Nahrawân."[88] After the battle of Nahrawân, he took the property of the slain to Kufah and said: "Whoever recognises anything, let him take it." The people started taking things until there was one pot left, then a man came and took it.[89] 'Ali (ﷺ) did not divide anything among his troops except what the Kharijites had brought into battle with them: weapons and horses only.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) did not regard the Kharijites as disbelievers. Before the battle, he tried to bring them back to the main body of Muslims, and many of them did come back. He exhorted them and reminded them of the seriousness of fighting. Ibn Qudâmah said: "He did this because his aim was to restrain them and fend off their evil, not to kill them. If it was possible to achieve this by talking, that should take precedence over fighting because of the harm that may be caused to both parties as a result of fighting. This indicates that the Kharijites were a group of Muslims, as was stated by many of the scholars."[90]

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ (ﷺ) called them evildoers (*fâsiqoon*). It was narrated that Muṣ'ab ibn Sa'd said: "I asked my father about this verse; are they the Ḥarooriyyah (Kharijites)?: ﴾Say [O Muhammad]: 'Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of [their] deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds.'﴿ *(Qur'an 18: 103-104)*. My father said: 'No, they are the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians. As for the Jews, they disbelieved in Muhammad (ﷺ); as for the Christians, they disbelieved in paradise and said, "There is no food or drink there." The verses that refer to the Ḥarooriyyah are: ﴾And He misleads thereby only those who are Al-Fâsiqoon [the rebellious, disobedient to Allah]. Those who break Allah's Covenant after ratifying it, and sever what Allah has ordered to be joined [as regards Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism, and to practise its laws on the earth and also as regards keeping good relations with kith and kin], and do mischief on earth, it is they who are the losers.﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 26-27)*.'" According to a report narrated from Sa'd, when he was asked about them, he said: "They are people who turned away (from the path of Allah), and Allah turned their hearts away (from the right path)."[91]

'Ali (ﷺ) was asked whether they were disbelievers. He said: "They have fled from disbelief." He was asked: "Are they hypocrites?" He said: "The hypocrites only remember Allah a little." He was asked: "What are they?" He said: "They are people who transgressed against us, so we fought them." According to another report: "They are people who transgressed against us, therefore we prevailed over them." According to a third report: "They are people upon whom a fitnah came, and they became blind and deaf."[92] 'Ali (ﷺ) also offered this advice to his army and to the Muslim Ummah after him: "If they go against a just ruler, then fight them, but if they go against an unjust ruler, do not fight them, because they have a reason."[93]

It may be noted that 'Ali (ﷺ) regretted and was grieved by the fighting in the Battle of the Camel and Ṣiffeen, while he expressed satisfaction and contentment about fighting the Kharijites. Ibn Taymiyah said: "The texts and scholarly consensus differentiate between the two cases. He fought the Kharijites on the basis of a text from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and was happy about that, and none of the Companions objected to that. As for his fighting on the day of Ṣiffeen, he showed a great deal of sorrow and regretted it."[94]

1.6. Rulings of Islamic law resulting from the battles of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) managed, on the basis of his abundant knowledge and deep understanding, to set out some principles or rulings which form Sharia guidelines on fighting transgressors who rebel against legitimate authority. Sunni scholars and jurists based their rulings on the way he dealt with transgressors and rebels, and they derived rulings and guidelines from his rightly-guided conduct in this area. The majority of scholars say that if it were not for the wars of 'Ali (ﷺ) against those who opposed him, we would not know the proper Sharia way of fighting transgressors and rebels from among the Muslims.[95] 'Ali (ﷺ) himself said: "What do you think (would happen) if I was not there? Who would be able to manage the Muslims' affairs or treat them the way I am treating them?"[96]Al-Aḥnaf said to 'Ali: "O 'Ali, our people in Basra are claiming that if you prevail over them tomorrow, you will kill their men and take their women captive." He said: "That should not be feared from a man like me. Is it permissible to do that to anyone except the one who turns away and disbelieves?"[97]

Based on that, fighting fellow Muslims is different from fighting disbelievers and apostates in several ways:

1. The aim of fighting is to deter them. They should not be killed deliberately, because the aim is to bring them back to obedience and to stop their evil, not to kill them, whereas it is permissible to deliberately kill the polytheists and apostates [in the case of war].[98]

2. If slaves, women or children fight on the side of the transgressors, they all come under the same ruling as free, adult men. They are only being fought to protect against their harm, so they are to be fought when they are attacking but left alone when they are fleeing, whereas apostates and disbelievers may be killed whether they are attacking or fleeing.[99]

3. If the transgressors refrain from fighting — whether that involves coming back to obedience, laying down their weapons, being defeated, or becoming incapable because of injury, sickness or being captured — it is not permissible to finish off their wounded or kill the captives, whereas it is permissible to kill wounded polytheists or apostates, and to execute prisoners. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated in his *Muṣannaf* from 'Ali that he said on the day of the Camel: "Do not pursue anyone who is running away or finish off anyone who is wounded. Whoever throws down his weapon is safe."[100] According to a report narrated by 'Abdur-Razzâq, 'Ali (ﷺ) instructed his caller to call out on the day of Basra: "Do not finish off anyone who is wounded, do not pursue anyone who is fleeing, do not enter any house. Whoever lays down his weapon is safe, and whoever locks his door is safe." He also did not take any of their belongings.[101] 'Ali said on the day of the Camel: "Do not pursue anyone who is running away, finish off anyone who is wounded, or kill any captive. Stay away from the women even if they impugn your honour and slander your leaders, for I remember that during the pre-Islamic time of ignorance, if a man hit a woman with a palm

branch or a stick, he would be shamed because of that, he and his descendants after him."[102] It was narrated that Abu Umâmah al-Bâhili (ﷺ) said: "I was present at Ṣiffeen, and they did not finish off anyone who was wounded, kill anyone who was fleeing, or strip anyone who had been killed of his weapons."[103]

4. The way in which captured transgressors are to be treated depends on the circumstances. If it is certain that the prisoner will not go back to fighting, then he is to be released. If there is no such certainty, then he is to be detained until the war is over, at which time he is released. It is not permissible to detain him after that, whereas it is permissible to keep the disbeliever captive.[104]

5. When fighting other Muslims, it is not permissible to seek help from the polytheists or from people of the Book living under Muslim rule. When fighting apostates and hostile non-Muslims, it is permissible to seek their help.[105]

6. A truce should not be made with Muslim opponents specifying a fixed period of time, nor should a peace deal be made with them in return for money. If a truce is made with them, it is not binding, and if the Muslim leader is not able to fight them, he should wait until he has the power to do so. If he makes a peace deal with them in return for money, it is not valid; the money should be examined and the source checked. If it came from their zakâh and fay', it should not be returned, but it should be distributed to those who are entitled to the zakâh and fay'. However, if it came from their own wealth, it is not permissible to take possession of it; it must be returned to them.[106] 'Ali (ﷺ) did not regard the wealth of those who fought him in the Battle of the Camel as permissible.

7. If the Muslims rebel against the ruler on the basis of what may be a valid reason, he should communicate with them. If they say

that they were wronged in any way, he should set things right. If their argument is confused or false, he should explain to them; when 'Ali (ﷺ) explained to the Kharijites what was wrong with their argument, many of them came back to the ranks of the main body of Muslims.[107] If they recant, all well and good; otherwise it is an obligation upon him and the Muslims to fight them.[108]

8. If the Muslim malcontents do not stop showing obedience to the ruler, they do not gather together in a place where they stay together away from everybody else, and they are just individuals who can be easily controlled, then they are to be left alone and not fought. They should be subject to just and fair rules with regard to their rights and duties.[109]

9. Muslim transgressors should not be fought in ways that will cause widespread ruin and destruction, such as using fire, catapults that hurl heavy or burning objects, or other such weapons. (Unless it is necessary to do that, such as when they fortify themselves in a place and cannot be defeated otherwise. In that case, it is permissible for the ruler to attack them with catapults and fire, according to the view of ash-Shâfa'i and Abu Ḥaneefah.[110]) Their houses should not be burned, and their trees should not be cut down, whereas all of that is permissible in the case of fighting the disbelievers and polytheists.

10. It is not permissible to seize booty from their wealth or to take their women and children captive, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "It is not permissible to take the wealth of a Muslim unless he gives it willingly."[111] It was narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) said on the day of the Camel: "Whoever recognises anything of this wealth that belongs to him, let him take it."[112]

This was one of the reasons why the Kharijites opposed him. They said: "He fought and did not take his opponents'

womenfolk captive or take any booty. If they are disbelievers, we should be allowed to take their womenfolk captive; if they are believers, it is not permissible to take their womenfolk captive or to fight them." Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) said to them in his discussion with them: "With regard to your saying that he fought and did not take the women captive or take any booty, would you take your mother 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) captive and regard (intimacy with) her as permissible like any other woman, when she is your mother? If you say, 'We regard (intimacy with) her as permissible like any other woman,' then you have become disbelievers, and if you say, 'She is not our mother,' you have become disbelievers."[113]

Ibn Qudâmah commented: "The reason for fighting the transgressors is to keep them at bay and bring them back to the truth, not because they are regarded as disbelievers. Nothing is permissible with regard to them except what is necessary for self defence, as in the case of an attacker or a bandit. The ruling on his property and his womenfolk and children remains the same, namely that they are protected in Sharia."[114]

From the reports narrated from 'Ali (ﷺ), it seems that it is permissible to make use of their weapons. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated that Abu al-Bakhtari said: "When the people of the Camel were defeated, 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'Do not pursue anyone who is leaving the battlefield, but whatever is left of mounts or weapons, you can have it.'"[115] According to another report, he said: "Do not take anything of their property except what you find in their camp."[116]

11. Whoever among the transgressors is killed is to be washed and shrouded, and the funeral prayer offered over them, because they are Muslims, according to the opinion of ash-Shâfa'i and aṣḥâb ar-Ra'y.[117]

12. If the transgressors are not innovators, then they are not evildoers, and the fighting of the ruler and the people of justice against them is only because of their misinterpretation. Their case is similar to that of scholars who try to derive rulings from texts. According to the view of ash-Shâfa'i, if one of them is of good character, his testimony is to be accepted. As for the Kharijites and innovators, if they rebel against the ruler, their testimony is not to be accepted because they are considered evildoers.[118]
13. It is permissible for one who is on the side that is in the right to kill his relative who is on the transgressing side, because killing him is lawful and is like carrying out a ḥadd punishment against him; however, it is not permissible to seek to do that.[119]
14. If the transgressing group previously had control of the city, and they collected land tax and zakâh and carried out ḥadd punishments, they should not be asked to pay back what they collected when the group that is in the right regains control of that city. When 'Ali (ﷺ) defeated the people of Basra after the Battle of the Camel, he did not ask them for anything that they had collected.[120]
15. The ruling on one who is in the right inheriting from one who is in the wrong, and vice versa. A transgressor who killed a person who was with the group that is in the right cannot inherit from him and vice versa, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The killer does not inherit."[121] Abu Ḥaneefah's opinion was that: "One who is in the right may inherit from a transgressor, but not the other way round." Abu Yoosuf said: "Each of them may inherit from the other, because each is fighting for what he thinks is the right cause."[122] This was also the view of an-Nawawi.[123]
16. If the transgressors cannot be fought off except by killing them, then it is permissible to kill them. In this case, there is no sin or liability on those who kill them, nor is any expiation required of

them; they did what was enjoined upon them, and they killed for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). ﴾Then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 9)*. If a Muslim is attacked, and the only way he can ward off the attacker or protect himself is by killing him, then it is permissible for him to defend himself by killing the one who wanted to kill him.

In the case of war, there is no liability for property of the transgressors that is destroyed by those who are in right.[124] By the same token, the transgressors are not liable for lives or property that they destroy in the case of war, according to the more correct opinion, as an-Nawawi said.[125] Az-Zuhri narrated that there was consensus among the Companions that the transgressor was not liable if he killed one who was in the right. He said: "The first fitnah broke out when the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were still alive, among whom were those who had been at Badr. They were agreed that no one should be subjected to retaliatory punishment, or have his wealth confiscated, for actions he based on his own understanding of Qur'an."[126] According to a report narrated by 'Abdur-Razzâq, the first turmoil broke out when many of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who had been present at Badr were still alive. They were unanimously agreed that no ḥadd punishment was to be carried out on anyone for taking female captives on the basis of their own interpretation of the Qur'an, no retaliatory punishment was to be imposed for blood that they regarded as permissible to shed on the basis of their own interpretation of the Qur'an, and they were not to be required to return property that they had regarded as permissible to take on the basis of their own interpretation of the Qur'an, unless it was something specific whose owner was known, in which case it was to be returned to its owner.[127]

1.7. Most significant characteristics of the Kharijites

The one who researches the history of the Kharijite sect will note a number of distinctive characteristics of the followers of this sect, including the following:

1.7.1. Going to extremes in religious issues

Undoubtedly the Kharijites were people of devotion and worship. They were very enthusiastic about adhering to Islam by applying its rulings and keeping away from everything that it forbids. They also tried hard to completely avoid falling into any sin that is contrary to Islam. That became a prominent feature of this group, and no one could come anywhere close to them in this regard. There is nothing more indicative of that than the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "They will recite Qur'an, and your recitation will be as nothing in comparison to theirs; your fasting will be as nothing in comparison to theirs."[128] Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) said, describing them when he entered upon them to discuss with them: "I entered upon people, and I have never seen anyone strive harder in worship than them. Their foreheads bore marks because of prostration, their hands were like the knees of camels, they wore washed shirts and strove hard, and their faces were pale and wan from spending their nights in prayer."[129] It was narrated that Jundub al-Azdi said: "We went to the camp of the Kharijites when we were with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, and we heard them humming like bees, because of their reciting Qur'an."[130]

They were people who fasted, prayed and read Qur'an a great deal, but they overstepped the mark of moderation and went to extremes. They became overly strict, to the extent that this strictness made them go against the principles of Islam by following what their reasoning suggested to them, such as the idea that the one who

commits a major sin is to be regarded as a disbeliever. (We will discuss their beliefs and ideas below.) Some of them went to such extremes in that regard that they applied this opinion to one who commits any sin, even a minor sin; they regarded him as a disbeliever and polytheist who was doomed to spend eternity in hell.[131] As a result of this strictness, which took them beyond the boundaries of Islam and its sublime goals, they accused every Muslim who disagreed with them of being a disbeliever or a hypocrite. They even regarded it as permissible to shed the blood of those who disagreed with them.[132] Some of them, such as the Azâriqah, regarded it as permissible to kill the women and children of those who differed with them.[133]

Undoubtedly because of their ignorance, strictness and harshness, the Kharijites distorted the beauties of Islam in a very strange way. This going to extremes, using far-fetched interpretations, took them away from the spirit of Islam and its beauty and moderation. In their extreme ways, they followed a path that was never preached by Muhammad (ﷺ) or encouraged in the noble Qur'an. The piety that they showed outwardly was like a kind of blind piety; their outward righteousness was in fact superficial. Their interpretation of Islam was artificially attractive. They hoped for paradise and wanted to strive for it by means of strictness, extremism and exaggeration, in a way that put them beyond the boundary of what is right.[134] The Prophet (ﷺ) warned against going to extremes or being overly strict with regard to religious matters, because it is contrary to the moderate and easy nature of Islam, and he told us that the one who goes to extremes is deserving of doom and loss. It is narrated in a sound report that he (ﷺ) said: "Those who go to extremes are doomed,"[135] and he said it three times. Thus the oddness of the Kharijites becomes clear. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Religion is very easy. Whoever overburdens himself in religion will be defeated, so try your best to do what is right. If you cannot attain perfection, then strive to do that which will bring you close to it."[136]

1.7.2. Ignorance of religion

Among the greatest problems of the Kharijites are ignorance of the Qur'an and Sunnah, poor understanding, lack of contemplation, lack of reasoning and failure to apply the texts to the right situation. Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) thought they were the worst of Allah's creation, and he said: "They picked out verses that were revealed concerning the disbelievers, and they applied them to the believers."[137] If he was asked about the Ḥarooriyyah, he would say: "They regard Muslims as disbelievers and regard their blood and their wealth as permissible, they marry women during their 'iddahs, and if a woman comes to them, one of them will marry her although she has a husband. I do not know of anyone who is more deserving of being fought than them."[138]

Due to their ignorance of the laws of Allah (ﷻ), they thought that arbitration was a sin that implied disbelief, meaning that the one who became involved in that should admit that he was a disbeliever for doing so and then repent.[139] This is what they demanded from 'Ali (ﷺ); they wanted him to confess that he was a disbeliever and then repent. The Kharijites' thinking of him, and the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr with him, as being wrong, while regarding themselves as having more knowledge and understanding than them, is indeed the essence of ignorance and misguidance.[140]

One of the signs of their extreme ignorance may be seen in the incident where they came across Abdullah ibn Khabbâb (ﷺ), who was with his pregnant slave woman. They discussed some issues with him, then they asked him about his opinion of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and 'Ali (ﷺ), and he spoke highly of them. They got angry with him and threatened to kill him in the worst manner; they killed him and slit open the woman's belly.[141] A pig belonging to the non-Muslims passed by them, and one of them killed it. They thought that this was not appropriate, so they looked for the owner of the pig and gave him

compensation for his pig. How strange it is that a pig would have greater sanctity than a Muslim, in the eyes of someone who claimed to belong to Islam.[142] Such is the devotion of the ignorant, which was dictated to them by whims and desires and by Satan.[143]

Ibn Ḥajar said: "When the Kharijites ruled that those who differed with them were disbelievers, they regarded it as permissible to shed their blood, but they kept away from the people of the Book who were under Muslim protection, saying: 'We have to adhere to the covenant with them.' They refrained from fighting the polytheists and focused on fighting the Muslims. All of that was the result of ignorant devotion on the part of people whose hearts were not illuminated by the light of knowledge and who did not have a strong, solid base of knowledge to protect them. It is sufficient for them that their leader rejected what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said and accused him of being unfair. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound."[144] Ibn Taymiyah said concerning them: "They are ignorant, and they departed from the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah because of ignorance."[145]

Thus it is clear that ignorance was one of the most prominent characteristics of that group, which was one of the groups that are attributed to Islam. Ignorance is a serious sickness, which causes doom in such a way that the individual does not realise it; in fact, he may intend to do good but fall into the opposite.[146]

1.7.3. Rebelling against authority

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Due to their misguidance, these people believed that the leaders of guidance and the main group of Muslims were unjust and misguided. This is the view of those who drifted away from the Sunnah, such as the Râfiḍis and their ilk. They regarded what they saw of oppression and injustice as disbelief; then they based the rulings of their own

innovation on that."[147] Therefore they rebelled against authority and strove to create division among the Muslims.

This is explained by their attitude towards Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ); at the most critical time, they let him down, opposed him and rebelled against him.[148] That has remained one of their characteristics throughout history. If anyone disagrees with them concerning any issue, they label him as an enemy and cast him aside, to the point where they divide into many groups, each group regarding the others as disbelievers. Hence there has been a great deal of fighting, division and rebellion among them.[149]

1.7.4. Denouncing people as disbelievers because of sin, and regarding the blood and wealth of the Muslims as permissible

Ibn Taymiyah said: "The other difference of the Kharijites and followers of innovation is that they regard people as disbelievers because of sin and bad deeds; as a consequence of that, they regard the blood and wealth of the Muslims as permissible, believing that the Muslim lands are the lands of war and that their own land is the land of faith. The majority of Râfiḍis say the same. This is the root of innovation, which is proven by the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the consensus of the early generation to be innovation; what is permissible is regarded as a sin, and sin is regarded as disbelief."[150] The Kharijites were distinguished by their particular views and opinions, through which they parted ways with the main body of the Muslims and regarded their views as part of the only religion that is acceptable to Allah (ﷻ). In their view, those who disagreed with them concerning that had gone beyond the bounds of Islam, so they must be disavowed. Indeed, some of them went to extremes in that regard and thought it obligatory to fight those who differed with them; they regarded it as permissible to shed their blood.[151]

For example, they killed Abdullah ibn Khabbâb for no other reason than that he did not agree with their opinion.[152] Ibn Katheer said: "They started to kill women and children, slitting open the bellies of pregnant women and doing things that no one else did."[153] Ibn Taymiyah said: "The first innovation, such as that of the Kharijites, came about because of their poor understanding of the Qur'an. They did not intend to go against it, but they understood from it something that was not indicated by it. Therefore they thought that those who commit sin are to be regarded as disbelievers, because the believer is the one who is righteous and pious. They said: 'The one who is not righteous and pious is a disbeliever who will abide in hell forever.' Then they said: "Uthmân and 'Ali and those who supported them and loved them are not believers, because they judged by something other than that which Allah has revealed.' Thus their innovation was based on two ideas: that the one who goes against the Qur'an in his actions or mistaken opinion is a disbeliever, and that this notion applied to 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) and those who supported them. Hence it is essential to avoid labelling believers as disbelievers because of their sins and mistakes. This was the first innovation that appeared in Islam, and those who followed it denounced the Muslims as disbelievers and regarded their blood and wealth as permissible. There are sound, proven hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) that criticise them (these innovators) and enjoin fighting them."[154]

1.7.5. Believing it to be possible for the Prophet (ﷺ) to do something that is not appropriate for him to do, such as being unjust

Ibn Taymiyah said: "The Kharijites regarded it as possible for the Messenger (ﷺ) himself to be unjust and for his Sunnah to be misguided, and they did not regard it as obligatory to obey and follow him. Instead, they believed in what he conveyed of the Qur'an but not

what he prescribed of the Sunnah that — according to their claim — contradicted the apparent meaning of the Qur'an. The majority of the innovators and Kharijites followed them in that regard. If they think that the Messenger said something that differs from their views, they will not follow him; rather they try to avoid the evidence, either by rejecting the chain of transmission or by misinterpreting the report itself; sometimes they criticise the chain of narrators and sometimes they criticise the text. Therefore they are neither following nor adhering to the true Sunnah, which was brought by the Messenger (ﷺ); in fact, they are not even following the Qur'an."[155]

1.7.6. Criticising and regarding others as misguided

One of the most prominent characteristics of the Kharijites is their criticising the imams of guidance and regarding them as misguided, unjust and mistaken. This characteristic is embodied in the attitude of Dhul-Khuwayṣirah towards the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ) when he told him: "O Messenger of Allah, be just."[156] Dhul-Khuwayṣirah regarded himself as more pious than the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he judged the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to be unjust and unfair in dividing the spoils. This characteristic has been constant throughout their history and has had the worst effect, because so many meanings and actions were based on it.[157]

1.7.7. Thinking in negative terms

This attribute of the Kharijites was embodied in Dhul-Khuwayṣirah's ignorant verdict regarding the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ) as lacking in sincerity, when he said: "By Allah, this is a division in which there is no fairness and which was not intended for the sake of Allah."[158] When Dhul-Khuwayṣirah saw that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had given to the rich leaders and not to the poor, he did not interpret this conduct in a good way. This was strange, especially

when there were many reasons to interpret this action in a positive way. Even if there were no other reason but that the one who did it was the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ), that would have been sufficient reason to think positively of it. Dhul-Khuwayṣirah refused to do so and had negative thoughts because of his psychological problem, then he tried to conceal this problem by pretending to call for justice. Hence Satan laughed at him and tricked him, making him fall into his trap. Man should watch himself and examine his motives and aims. He should beware of his whims and desires and be alert to the tricks of Satan, who often makes bad deeds appear attractive by adorning them with a bright cover, and justifies abhorrent behaviour on the basis of adhering to principles of truth. One of the means of protecting oneself against the tricks and traps of Satan is knowledge. If Dhul-Khuwayṣirah had had the slightest trace of knowledge or understanding, he would not have made this mistake.[159]

1.7.8. Harshness towards the Muslims

The Kharijites are known for their harshness and roughness. They were very harsh and violent towards the Muslims, and this reached terrible levels. They regarded the blood, honour and wealth of the Muslims as permissible, and they terrorised them and killed them. As for the enemies of Islam, such as idol worshippers and others, they left them alone, maintaining peace with them and not bothering them. History has recorded dark pages for the Kharijites in this regard.[160] The story of Abdullah ibn Khabbâb and his murder has not yet been forgotten.

While the Kharijite attitude towards the Muslims was accompanied by harshness, cruelty and violence, they were gentle, peaceful and kind with the disbelievers.[161] The Lawgiver describes Sharia as easygoing and tolerant; it recommends strictness towards the disbelievers and kindness towards the believers, but the Kharijites

did the opposite.[162] Allah says: ﴾Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves,﴿ *(Qur'an 48: 29)* and, ﴾O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion [Islam], Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 54)*. The Kharijites did the opposite of what is mentioned in these verses; they terrorised the Muslims.[163] These are some of the characteristics for which the Kharijites are well known.

The most important manifestations of extremism in modern times

The manifestations of extremism in modern times are many and include the following:

1.7.8.i. Being overly strict with oneself in religious commitment and making things difficult for others

The phenomenon of extremism in modern times is a drifting away from the path of moderation in religious commitment, which was the way of the Prophet (ﷺ). He warned us against that in the hadith which was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Religion is very easy. Whoever overburdens himself in religion will be defeated, so try your best to do what is right. If you cannot attain perfection, then strive to do that which will bring you close to it."[164]

Extremism in religion often stems from a lack of understanding of the faith. These are among the most prominent characteristics of the Kharijites, namely extremism in religious commitment and lack of proper understanding. Most of those who have some inclination towards the ideas of the Kharijites today are

people in whom these two characteristics may be found.[165] One of the manifestations of extremism is making things difficult instead of making them easy. Extremists require people to do things that they are not able to do, or oblige them to do things that they are not required to do according to Islam, which is of an easy nature. They do not pay attention to the variations in people's abilities and level of understanding, so they address them concerning concepts that they do not understand and demand of them things that they cannot do.

One of the causes of harshness is a corrupt kind of piety, ignorance of the prioritising of rulings and a failure to understand that not all people are on the same level. Some of the manifestations of making things difficult are: obliging everyone to refer to Sharia texts and derive rulings, talking to people about things that they cannot comprehend, ignoring concessions granted in Sharia, and making obligatory things that are not obligatory according to Sharia.[166]

1.7.8.ii. Arrogance and looking down on people, and what that leads to of young people taking positions of leadership

One of the prominent features of the phenomenon of extremism in modern times is arrogance and looking down on others, as well as claiming to have knowledge when one of them does not even know the basic principles and simplest rulings of Islam. One may have a little knowledge, without any proper understanding of the fundamentals, but he thinks that he has acquired the knowledge of the earlier and later generations. In his arrogance, he may even think that the scholars have little knowledge, and he gives up seeking knowledge. Thus he will be doomed because of his arrogance, and he will cause others to be doomed. This is how the early Kharijites were; they claimed to be scholars and people of knowledge. They insulted the scholars, when in reality, it was they who were among the most ignorant of people.[167]

This pretence of knowledge and this arrogance leads to young and foolish people trying to become prominent in calling to Islam without knowledge or proper understanding. Although they are ignorant, some people take them as leaders. They issue fatwas without knowledge and judge matters without understanding; they confront major events without any experience or wisdom and without referring to the people who have the knowledge, understanding, experience and wisdom. Indeed, many of them look down on the scholars and shaykhs and do not appreciate their status. If one of the shaykhs issues a fatwa that does not appeal to their whims and desires, or is not in harmony with their way of thinking or attitude, they will start accusing him of a lack of knowledge, cowardice, hypocrisy, naïveté, lack of awareness and other shortcomings. Spreading these rumours causes division, corruption, resentment against the scholars and undermining of their value and status. This causes a great deal of harm to the Muslims in both religious and worldly terms.[168]

1.7.8.iii. Persisting in one's opinion and regarding others as ignorant

One of the most prominent features of extremism in modern times is fanatical adherence to one's opinion without acknowledging the validity of other opinions, and rejecting any truth they have as long as it is different from one's own view. Among the causes that generate fanatical adherence to one's own opinion are lack of knowledge, lack of awareness of any other view, admiring one's own stance and following whims and desires.

The problem of admiring one's own view and being fanatical in adhering to it was the cause of doom in the past. For example, what caused the doom of the ignorant Dhul-Khuwayṣirah? Ibn al-Jawzi says: "His problem was that he was pleased with his own opinion.

Had he thought a little, he would have realised that no view is superior to that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)."[169] What caused the doom of the followers of Dhul-Khuwayṣirah was their admiration of their own opinions and their thinking badly of others. The Kharijites were devoted in worship, but they believed that they were more knowledgeable than 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), and this was a serious problem[170] that caused their doom. These wretches fell prey to some phrases which they did not understand well, and they would not listen to anyone who could explain them and help them to understand them, because they thought that they were right and everyone else was wrong.

Muhammad Abu Zahrah says: "They were obsessed with some slogans such as 'faith', 'there is no ruling except the ruling of Allah', and 'disavowing the wrongdoers'. In the name of these slogans, they regarded it as permissible to shed Muslim blood and spread killing throughout the Muslim lands, attacking everywhere."[171] This hateful fanaticism prevented them from responding to the truth after it became clear. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) debated with them, and Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) debated with them, and they left no excuse for them. They rebutted their flawed arguments, established clear proof against them and refuted them with decisive arguments, but only a few of them responded; most of them rushed to shed the blood of the Muslims. Adhering fanatically to one's point of view and regarding others as ignorant is contrary to important Islamic principles such as consultation and offering sincere advice.

1.7.8.iv. Criticising the righteous scholars

The current era is witness to a strange campaign and weird phenomenon, namely a kind of aggression that is aimed at undermining the position of devoted scholars by criticising them and accusing them of being misguided and confused. Newspapers, magazines, books, articles, classrooms and study circles have seen many examples of this campaign, which has caused a great deal of

harm to the Muslim Ummah by creating and deepening division. Undoubtedly there are reasons for criticising and undermining the scholars, such as: learning without a teacher, misunderstanding some statements of the scholars, following whims and desires, and envy.

Some young people have resorted to bad conduct, namely seeking out the faults and mistakes of the scholars, looking for some odd views they may have, and misinterpreting their words in a way that is different from what was intended. They did that to justify their senseless campaign, the aim of which is to undermine scholars, both classical and contemporary, whose views differ from theirs and who do not approve of their way of thinking, which is not the way of moderation. This action of theirs has caused a great deal of harm to Islam and a great deal of joy to the enemies of Islam, such as the Zionists and idol worshippers.

This shameful attitude, which is indicative of ignorance, sickness and resentment, is something that the scholars have warned against because of the danger it poses to the Muslims and because it is carrying out the plans of the enemies of Islam and achieving their goals for them, without any effort on their part.[172]

Ibn Taymiyah said, forbidding the narration of weak views from imams and scholars: "No one should narrate such weak opinions from any of the imams of the Muslims, whether by way of condemning him or by way of following him in this view. That is a kind of undermining of the imams and seeking to follow weak views. By following this method, the ruling official of the Tatars created turmoil among the Sunnis, so that he could lead them to leave Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah altogether and make them follow the way of the Râfiḍis and heretics."[173]

Those who challenge the devoted scholars of the Ummah are serving the interests of the Jews, Christians, tyrants and intelligence

agencies, whether they realise it or not. Those who are still criticising the scholars of the Ummah in this way have drifted away from the path of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, who say: "The scholars of the earliest generation, and the Tâbi'oon who came after them, are people of righteousness and good conduct, people of deep knowledge and understanding, who should not be referred to except in the best way. Whoever mentions them in a bad way is not following the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah."[174]

Those who criticise the devoted scholars of the Ummah should realise that backbiting about the scholars is a very serious sin, and the way in which Allah exposes those who undermine them is well known. This one who pretends to be a scholar does not realise that what matters when judging people is the numerous virtues and good deeds they have to their credit. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The one who has knowledge of Islam and experience of life will know for certain that the prominent man who has served Islam and done righteous deeds, who holds a prominent position in Islam and among the people of Islam, may slip and make mistakes, but he may be excused for his mistake; indeed, he may be rewarded for his efforts to make the right decision. Therefore, it is not permissible to follow him in that mistake; at the same time, it is not permissible to weaken his position and status in the hearts of the Muslims."[175]

Who would be left for the Ummah of Islam if its scholars were undermined? It would be left with young people who cannot recite Qur'an well, do not understand Arabic, and do not have much knowledge about many branches of Islamic knowledge. This attitude of criticising the scholars fills the hearts of the enemies of Islam with joy, because it creates a generation without leaders. Have you ever seen a generation without leaders succeed?

The worst of people in previous nations were their scholars and rabbis, many of whom went astray and led others astray. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾O you who believe! Verily, there are many of the [Jewish] rabbis and the [Christian] monks who devour the wealth of mankind in falsehood, and hinder [them] from the way of Allah [i.e. Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism]﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 34).*

The best of the Muslims are their devoted, active scholars. Ash-Shu'bi said: "In every nation, their scholars are the worst — except for the Muslims, whose scholars are the best of them."[176] Ibn Taymiyah explained it this way: "Every nation apart from the Muslims is astray, and the ones who led them astray are their scholars, so their scholars are the worst of them. But the Muslims are following true guidance, and guidance is explained to the people by their scholars, so their scholars are the best of them."[177]

1.7.8.v. Thinking negatively

This problem is very widespread and is causing a great deal of harm at the present time. This disease may be fatal and a means of destruction and ruin; it may lead to serious consequences and a great deal of evil and corruption. There are causes for this disease such as ignorance, which means not being able to understand the reality of what one sees, hears and reads and the aim behind it, or not being able to understand the subtle rulings of Sharia with regard to some issues, especially if those issues are strange and require subtle understanding and farsightedness. This ignorance makes a person hasten to be suspicious, think negatively and undermine the position of a particular scholar.

Another cause of this problem is whims and desires, which is the worst of diseases. In this case, seeing or hearing something that one does not like, agree with or want is sufficient to make a person's suspicions run wild. He avoids weighing matters according to a precise Sharia standard, trying to find excuses, or pausing to ponder

and re-examine the issue, let alone look critically at his own understanding. Whims and desires prevent all of that.

Another cause is self-admiration and arrogance, which means thinking highly of oneself and feeling proud of one's own understanding (if one has any understanding). This self-admiration prompts one to praise himself and look down on others. In his estimation, he is right and everyone else is wrong; he is guided and everyone else is misguided.

We have seen some people whose suspicion and negative thinking has reached a very peculiar level, leading them to exclude all other people, living and dead, and to accuse them of being deviant and misguided, guilty of following corrupt beliefs. According to this view, everyone else has a problem with his beliefs; these people alone are sincere. Everyone else is doomed, but they are saved. This negative thinking is a disease, and every disease has serious effects. Bad only leads to bad, and among its bad effects are the following:

- ❖ It prompts a person to seek out faults and look for mistakes. By doing so, he exposes himself to the wrath and punishment of Allah, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) warned people in whose hearts there is this sickness: "O you who have believed with your tongues but faith has not entered your hearts, do not backbite the Muslims or seek out their faults, for the one who seeks out their faults, Allah will seek out his faults. When Allah seeks out a person's faults, He will expose him even if he is in his house."[178]
- ❖ It prompts a person to backbite and slander the honour of others, and instils a vengeful attitude.
- ❖ Finally, negative thinking sows division among the Muslims, breaks the bonds of brotherhood, severs the ties of love and creates enmity, hatred and resentment.

It is quite clear that this disease is very serious, so Islam's attitude towards it is decisive. It calls for and enjoins avoiding most suspicion, because real-life events prove that being controlled by suspicion and following what it dictates leads to adverse consequences and a great deal of harm.[179] Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 12).*

Ibn Katheer said: "Here Allah (ﷻ) is forbidding His believing slaves to engage in much suspicion, which means making accusations and believing that one's family, relatives and other people are betraying you when there is no cause to do so, because that may be pure sin. So a lot of suspicion is to be avoided as a precautionary measure."[180]

One of the ways of averting suspicion or negative thinking is by seeking excuses for your brother. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) said: "Do not think anything but good about the word spoken by your believing brother when there is a way to interpret it in a good manner."[181]

1.7.8.vi. Being harsh and cruel with others

One of the manifestations of extremism in modern times is harshness and cruelty in dealing with others, when being harsh is not appropriate. It is as if the basic principle when dealing with others is to be cruel and harsh, not gentle and merciful. This harshness is the usual feature of some young people, whose violence and cruelty may go beyond words to actions, so that innocent blood is shared and buildings are destroyed because of it. This violence may cause a great deal of harm to its perpetrators and to the Ummah. There are a number of main reasons why some young people use violence, harshness and cruelty, which we may sum up as follows:

— Going through hard times. Many of these young people

have been subjected to various trials that have had an impact on their psyches, hence there is an extreme reaction. They responded to violence with violence, which then became second nature to them.

— Ignorance of the rules connected to enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil make up one of the most important duties that Allah (ﷻ) has made obligatory upon this Ummah. However, the one who does it should be knowledgeable about it, so that he can achieve the interests and avoid making matters worse. It should be done in the gentlest and most straightforward way, and there are matters that should be understood and known by the one who wants to carry out this duty. For example, one must know that this duty may be fulfilled sometimes in the heart (by feeling discontent with the evil or hating it); it may be fulfilled sometimes on the tongue (by speaking out and giving advice); and it may be fulfilled sometimes by taking action (by physically removing evil). Fulfilling it in the heart is obligatory in every case, but some people make a mistake here; they want to enjoin good and forbid evil either verbally or physically in all cases, without any understanding, forbearance or patience, and without looking at what is and is not more appropriate to the situation and what is or is not achievable. So they enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, believing that they are obeying Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ), when in fact they are violating the prescribed limits.[182]

— It is essential to have knowledge of what is good and what is evil, and to know how to distinguish between them. It is also essential to have knowledge of the people being

addressed. Part of righteousness and proper conduct is to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil in accordance with the straight path, which is the shortest path that leads to the desired results in the most straightforward manner. It is essential to be gentle and kind, and it is also essential to be forbearing and patient in putting up with the inevitable inconvenience and discomfort; otherwise, the person will cause more harm than good. So the three essential things are knowledge, kindness and patience: knowledge before enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, kindness when doing it and patience afterwards. He must have all three with him when enjoining what is good or forbidding what is evil. Al-Qâḍi Abu Ya'la said: "No one should enjoin what is good or forbid what is evil except one who has proper understanding of what he is enjoining and forbidding."[183] Being ignorant of these issues and not paying attention to them will lead to strictness and violence in calling people to Islam.

— Some young people use harsh and cruel methods when trying to guide people, debate with them and call them to give up what is contrary to Sharia. They think that being harsh will give results and deter people, but they forget that being kind and gentle is the original principle that is not to be forsaken until after all gentle and kind means have been exhausted. Gentleness is what yields good results and has an impact on people's hearts; harshness, on the other hand, puts people off in most cases and makes the transgressor persist in his ways. It is very strange that these people did not differentiate between the one who transgresses the limit knowingly and the one who does so unknowingly; between the one who promotes innovation and the duped, misguided victim; and between mistakes concerning which

there is a difference of scholarly opinion and mistakes on which there is consensus that they are wrong.

One of the causes of the harshness adopted by some of these people is roughness in dealing with their parents; they do not show them any respect or help them or serve them. These people forget that parents have a special status unlike other people, especially when it comes to calling and guiding them. That does not mean that one should compromise on religious commitment or adherence to any issue of Islam, or that one should commit sins in order to please their whims and desires — far from it. We are referring instead to good manners when dealing with them, such as being gentle in speech, being kind and patient with them and showing them compassion and mercy. Allah says:

﴾And We have enjoined on man [to be dutiful and good] to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years — give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination. But if they [both] strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not; but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do.﴿ *(Qur'an 31: 14-15)*

We have seen some young people refraining from helping people who mix good deeds with bad; in their view, these people are not deserving of any service, kind words or help. These young people do not have a clear idea of the concept of love and hate for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and the limits of each of them. For them, hating the bad deeds takes precedence over loving the good deeds. They forget that

providing social services is one of the most successful means of calling people to Islam, because it is a practical means that has a greater impact on people than mere words. They forget that their harsh treatment and refraining from helping deepens the gap between them and people and causes people to go and join the ranks of the deviants who are the enemies of Islam.

Another example of this extreme violence is what some of the people do, going beyond harshness of speech to killing and shedding blood — the blood of scholars, innocent soldiers or innocent civilians. Finally, it comes as no surprise to learn that these people of violence often turn against each other and attack one another, sometimes verbally and sometimes physically. This will come as no surprise if you study a little of the history of these groups which have abandoned the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the methodology of the righteous predecessors. These groups opposed one another and regarded one another as misguided disbelievers.

This is the fate of those who abandoned the methodology brought by the Seal of the Prophets (ﷺ). Islam's stance on violence and harshness when calling to Islam and interacting with people is very clear. Allah (ﷻ) says, enjoining Moosa and his brother Haroon: ﴿Go, both of you, to Fir'aun [Pharaoh], verily, he has transgressed [all bounds in disbelief and disobedience and behaved as an arrogant and as a tyrant]. And speak to him mildly; perhaps he may accept admonition or fear [Allah].﴾ *(Qur'an 20: 43-44)*

These were the instructions of our Lord (ﷻ) to Moosa and Haroon (ﷺ) when calling the tyrant Pharaoh: to speak mildly or gently when explaining the truth because it is more beneficial and more likely to be accepted and to instil fear of Allah (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel [the evil] with one which is better [i.e. Allah orders the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them

badly] then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, [will become] as though he was a close friend. But none is granted it [the above quality] except those who are patient — and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion [of happiness in the hereafter, i.e., paradise and of a high moral character] in this world.﴿ *(Qur'an 41: 34-35)*

The caller to Islam will inevitably encounter things that upset and anger him in his work, so it is essential for him to train himself to be patient and to protect himself by suppressing his anger and pardoning people. ﴾O my son! *Aqim-iṣ-Ṣalâh* [perform aṣ-Ṣalâh], enjoin [on people] *Al-Ma'roof* [Islamic Monotheism and all that is good], and forbid [people] from *Al-Munkar* [i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of Allah, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad], and bear with patience whatever befalls you. Verily, these are some of the important commandments [ordered by Allah with no exemption].﴿ *(Qur'an 31: 17)*

The caller to Islam should avoid things that provoke and annoy people and should avoid reviling and impugning others: ﴾And insult not those whom they [disbelievers] worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah wrongfully without knowledge.﴿ *(Qur'an 6: 108)*

There are many texts from the Prophet (ﷺ) which confirm this and focus on adhering to the principle of kindness and avoiding harshness and violence. He (ﷺ) said: "There is never any kindness in a thing but it beautifies it, and kindness is never absent from a thing but it makes it ugly."[184]

Kindness is the basic principle in calling people to Islam. That does not mean cancelling out strictness altogether — not at all. Strictness does have its place, after all means of kindness and patience have been exhausted. The guided one is the one whom Allah (ﷻ) guides to differentiate among different situations and whom He protects from whims and desires.[185]

2. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and Shiite thought

2.1. The meaning of the words 'Shia' and 'Rafḍ' in the Arabic language and in Sharia terminology

2.1.1. The meaning of the word 'Shia' in Arabic

In Arabic, a man's *shia* refers to his followers and supporters. The phrase *tashayya'a ar-rajulu* means 'the man claimed to believe in Shiism'. The phrase *tashâyya'a al-qawm* means 'the people divided into different groups'. Any group of people who are united and follow one another's opinions may be described as *shay'*. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾As was done in the past with the people of their kind [*ashyâ'ihim*]﴿ *(Qur'an 34: 54)*, referring to people like them among the past nations.[186] In *al-Miṣbâḥ al-Muneer*, it says: "(The word) *Shia* refers to followers and supporters. Any group of people who unite on an issue are a '*shia*' (party). Then the word *Shia* began to be used to describe a specific group."[187] So in linguistic terms, the word *Shia* refers to people, companions, followers and helpers. This meaning is used in some verses of the noble Qur'an, such as the following two verses:

﴾And he [Moosa] found there two men fighting, — one of his party [*shi'atihi*] [his religion — from the Children of Israel], and the other of his foes. The man of his [own] party asked him for help against his foe.﴿ *(Qur'an 28: 15)*

﴾And, verily, among those who followed his [Nooh's (Noah's)] way [*shi'atihi*] [Islamic Monotheism] was Ibrâheem [Abraham].﴿ *(Qur'an 37: 83)*

In the first verse, the word Shia refers to people; in the second verse it refers to the followers who agree with a view or method and take part in it.

2.1.2. The meaning of the word 'Shia' in Islamic terminology

The definition of the word 'Shia' is connected to different stages of their development and the development of their ideology or belief. It should be noted that the beliefs and ideas of the Shia are constantly developing and changing; Shiism during the early period was not like the Shiism that appeared later on. In the early period, no one was called a Shia except one who preferred 'Ali to 'Uthmân.[188] The words 'Shia' and ''Uthmâni' were used, with a Shia being one who preferred 'Ali over 'Uthmân. On this basis, the definition of the Shia in the earliest period is that they were those who preferred 'Ali to 'Uthmân only.[189] Ibn Taymiyah said: "The early Shia were those who, at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ), believed in the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar."[190] Shurayk ibn Abdullah, who was one of those who were described as being Shia, disagreed with giving the name of Shiism to those who preferred 'Ali over Abu Bakr and 'Umar, because this was contrary to the mutawâtir reports from 'Ali which stated the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

Tashayyu' (Shiism) means supporting and following, not opposing and differing.[191] Ibn Baṭṭah narrated that his shaykh, who was known as Abu al-'Abbâs ibn Masrooq, said: "Muhammad ibn Ḥumayd told us, Jareer told us, from Sufyân, that Abdullah ibn Ziyâd ibn Jareer said: Abu Isḥâq as-Subay'i came to Kufah, and Shahr ibn 'Aṭiyyah said: 'Let us go and see him.' They spoke, and Abu Isḥâq said: 'I left Kufah when no one doubted the superiority and precedence of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Now I have come,[192] and they are saying — by Allah, I do not know what they are saying.'" Muḥibb ad-

Deen al-Khaṭeeb said: "This is an important historical text that highlights the development of Shiism. Abu Isḥâq as-Subay'i was the shaykh and scholar of Kufah.[193] He was born during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Uthmân (ﷺ), three years before he was martyred, and he lived a long life, until he died in 127 AH. He was a child during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), and he said of himself: 'My father lifted me up so that I could see 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib delivering a sermon, with white hair and beard.' If we knew the date when he left Kufah and when he came back to visit it, we would know the exact date when the Shia in Kufah believed in what their Imam believed in of the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and when they began to differ with 'Ali with regard to what he used to believe and proclaim from the minbar of Kufah with regard to the superiority of his two brethren, the two companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), his two advisors, the two caliphs who became in charge of the Ummah at the best and purest time in our history."[194] Layth ibn Abi Sulaym said: "I met the first Shia and saw how they never regarded anyone as superior to Abu Bakr and 'Umar."[195]

The author of *Mukhtaṣar at-Tuḥfah* said: "Those of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr who lived at the time of 'Ali's caliphate, and those who followed them in truth, all acknowledged 'Ali's virtue and rights and recognised his status. They never undermined the position of any of his fellow Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), let alone accused one of being a disbeliever or slandered him."[196]

Over the years, Shiism did not maintain this level of purity, soundness and decency; the principles of Shiism changed, and the Shia became divided into many groups. Shiism became a cover used by everyone who wanted to plot against Islam and the Muslims, encompassing the enemies who harboured grudges and envy. This is why we call those who slander Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) Râfiḍis, because they do not deserve to be

described as Shia.[197] Anyone who knows about the ideological development of the Shia will not be surprised to find that there are a number of prominent scholars of hadith, other scholars and other prominent figures who were described as Shia, and they may be among the prominent Sunni scholars. This is because Shiism, as a concept and definition, at the time of the earliest generations was different from the concept and definition of Shiism later on.

Adh-Dhahabi said, when talking about those who were accused of following the innovation of Shiism: "Innovation is of two types: minor innovation, such as being extreme in Shiism or Shiism without going to extremes. This is found a great deal among the Tâbi'oon and their followers, even though their religious commitment, piety and sincerity were great. If we were to reject the narrations of these men, we would lose a large number of hadith reports, and this would be a serious problem. Then there is major innovation, such as complete Râfiḍism, going to extremes in that, undermining the position of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ) and promoting such ideas. The reports of this type of people are not to be accepted, and there is no respect for them. I cannot think of any of this type who is sincere or trustworthy; rather their way is lying, dissimulation (taqiyyah) and hypocrisy. How can the reports of such a man be accepted? That is utterly impossible. At the time of the earliest generation and according to their definition, the extreme Shia was the one who criticised and slandered 'Uthmân, az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, Mu'âwiyah and a group of those who fought 'Ali (ﷺ). But the extreme Shia nowadays, in our view, is the one who regards these leaders as disbelievers and disavows Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Such a person is misguided and a fabricator of lies."[198]

So Shiism is of varying degrees, levels and stages, and the Shia include various groups and sects. Before we begin our discussion on the definition of Shiism, we may note that the definition of the Shia

that is mentioned in most of the books that talk about different sects of Islam is that which persisted in describing the Imâmi Shia as being followers of 'Ali and the like.

This has led to a misconception that is contrary to the consensus of the Ummah. This misconception states that 'Ali was a Shia harbouring the same beliefs as the Shia, but in fact, 'Ali (ﷺ) was innocent of what the Shia believe about him and his descendants. It is essential to be more precise and careful when giving a definition, so as to avoid confusion. It should be said that they are those who **claim to be** followers of 'Ali. They did not follow 'Ali in any true sense because Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) did not believe in what they believed.[199] Or it may be said that they are the ones who **claim to be** supporters of 'Ali (ﷺ), or they are Râfiḍis. Hence some of the scholars describe them as the Râfiḍis who claim to be supporters of 'Ali (ﷺ).[200] Moreover, they are not following in the footsteps of the supporters and followers of 'Ali; they are impostors and Râfiḍis.[201]

2.1.3. The meaning of the word 'rafḍ' in Arabic

The word 'rafḍ' means rejecting, giving up, or abandoning. For example, the phrase *rafaḍtu ash-shay'* means 'I rejected the thing'.[202]

2.1.4. The meaning of the word 'Râfiḍah' in Islamic terminology

The Râfiḍah are one of the groups that claimed to be supporters of Ahl al-Bayt, while also disavowing Abu Bakr, 'Umar and most of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) except a few of them, denouncing them as disbelievers and reviling them.[203]Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Râfiḍah are those who disavowed, reviled and impugned the Companions of Muhammad the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).[204] Abdullah ibn Aḥmad

(may Allah have mercy on him) said: "I asked my father about the Râfiḍah, and he said: 'They are the ones who revile or impugn Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ).'"[205]

Abu al-Qâsim at-Taymi said in *Qawâm as-Sunnah*, defining them: "They are the ones who impugn Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) and those who love them."[206] The Râfiḍah were unique, among all the groups who claim to belong to the Muslim Ummah, in reviling the two shaykhs Abu Bakr and 'Umar. This is indicative of the severity of their doom and loss, may Allah (ﷻ) destroy them.[207]

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ) are hated and cursed by the Râfiḍah to the exclusion of all other sects."[208] The books of the Râfiḍah confirm this, because they regard love and support for the two shaykhs, or the lack thereof, as the criteria that differentiates between them and others whom they call Nâṣibis. Al-Darâzi narrated that Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Moosa said: "I wrote to 'Ali ibn Muhammad[209] about the Nâṣibi: 'With regard to testing him, is there any need for anything more than his giving precedence to *al-jibt waṭ-ṭâghoot*[210] and believing in their right to the caliphate?' The answer came back: 'Whoever believes that is a Nâṣibi.'"[211]

2.1.5. The reason why they are called Râfiḍah

The majority of scholars think that the reason why the Râfiḍis are so called is because they rejected (*rafaḍa*) Zayd ibn 'Ali and abandoned him after being part of his army, when he rebelled against Hishâm ibn 'Abdul-Malik in 121 AH. That was after they had declared their disavowal of the two shaykhs [Abu Bakr and 'Umar], and he told them not to do that. Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari said: "Zayd ibn 'Ali did not give precedence to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib over the rest of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); he loved Abu Bakr

and 'Umar, but he believed that it was a religious duty to rise up against unjust rulers. When he started his rebellion in Kufah with the supporters who had sworn allegiance to him, he heard some of them disparaging Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Zayd denounced those from whom he heard that, and those who had sworn allegiance to him separated from him. He said to them: 'You have rejected me (*rafaḍtumooni*).'"[212] This was the view of the author of *Qawâm as-Sunnah*,[213] ar-Râzi,[214] ash-Shahrastâni[215] and Ibn Taymiyah,[216] may Allah have mercy on them. Al-Ash'ari had a different opinion; according to him, they were called Râfiḍis because they rejected the right to caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar.[217]

2.1.6. The Râfiḍis today

The Râfiḍis today hate this name and do not accept it; they think that it is a name that was given to them by their opponents. Muḥsin al-Ameen says: "Ar-Râfiḍah is a derogatory name that is given to those who give precedence to 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to the caliphate, and this word is usually used as an insult and a put-down."[218] Hence today they are called Shia and have become known by this name to most people. Some writers and educated people have been influenced by that, so we see them using this term (Shia), whereas in fact the word Shia is a general term which includes everyone who supported 'Ali (ﷺ).[219] The authors of books on groups and sects stated that they are three types:

(a) Extremists, who are those who exaggerated about 'Ali (ﷺ) and claimed that he was divine or a prophet.

(b) Râfiḍis, who claimed that there is a divine text appointing 'Ali (ﷺ) as caliph. They disavow the caliphs who came before him and most of the Companions.

(c) Zaydis, who are the followers of Zayd ibn 'Ali. They give precedence to 'Ali (ﷺ) over the other Companions, but

> they also love Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both).[220]

Calling the Râfiḍis 'Shia' without giving a proper definition of the term is not correct, because this term 'Shia' includes the Zaydis,[221] who love Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ). Calling the Râfiḍis 'Shia' may give the impression that they are like the early Shia at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ) and afterwards, and all the earlier Shia were unanimously agreed on the superiority of 'Abu Bakr and 'Umar over 'Ali. They only thought that 'Ali was superior to 'Uthmân, and this group included many of the scholars and good and righteous people.

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Hence the early Shia who supported 'Ali or lived at that time did not dispute the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar; their dispute was as to whether 'Ali or 'Uthmân was superior."[222] Calling the Râfiḍis 'Shia' is one of the obvious errors that some contemporary writers fell into by following in the footsteps of the Râfiḍis, who attempted to rid themselves of this name because they realised that the early generations condemned and hated them. They wanted to rid themselves of the name by claiming to belong to the Shia in general, as a kind of camouflage and deceit before those who do not know about them. One effect of that is the mistake made by some beginner seekers of knowledge, who do not fully understand the exact meanings of terminology. They confuse the rulings that apply to the Râfiḍis with the rulings that apply to the Shia, because of the practice of using the word 'Shia' to include the Râfiḍis too. So they think that what was mentioned by some early scholars concerning the Shia is also applicable to the Râfiḍis, whereas the scholars differentiate between the two groups in all their rulings.[223]

Therefore it is essential to call the Râfiḍis by their real name, which was given to them by the scholars, and not to call them Shia in an absolute sense, because that is causing confusion and

misunderstanding. If they are called 'Shia,' then something should be added to it to indicate the particular group in question, such as saying 'the Imami Shia' or the 'Twelver Shia,' according to the custom of the scholars when mentioning them.[224] And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

2.2. Origin of the Râfiḍi Shia and the role of the Jews therein

The first one to promote the principles of Râfiḍi Shia beliefs, on which their other beliefs are based, was a Jewish man from Yemen whose name was Abdullah ibn Saba'. He became Muslim at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliph 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (رضي الله عنه) and travelled throughout the Muslim regions to promote these corrupt beliefs.

Aṭ-Ṭabari wrote in his book of history: "Abdullah ibn Saba' was a Jew from Ṣan'â', whose mother was a black woman. He became Muslim at the time of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), then he travelled through the lands of the Muslims, trying to misguide them. He started in the Hijaz, then went to Basra, then Kufah, then Syria, but he was not able to achieve what he wanted with anyone among the people of Syria. They expelled him, and he went to Egypt and lived there. Among the things that he said to them was: 'It is very strange that there are people who claim that 'Eesa will return but do not believe that Muhammad will return, when Allah says: ﴿Verily, He Who has given you [O Muhammad] the Qur'an [i.e. ordered you to act on its laws and to preach it to others] will surely, bring you back to *Ma'âd* [place of return, either to Makkah or to paradise after your death].﴾ *(Qur'an 28: 85)* Muhammad is more deserving of returning than 'Eesa.' This was accepted from him, and he explained to them the concept of some of the Companions returning from the dead to be judged before the Day of Resurrection, and they discussed it. After that, he told them that there were one thousand prophets, that each prophet had an appointed heir, and that 'Ali was the appointed heir of

Muhammad. Then he said: 'Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, and 'Ali was the seal of the appointed heirs.' He told them after that: 'Who is a greater wrongdoer than the one who did not carry out the instruction of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who pushed away the appointed heir of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and took control of the Ummah's affairs?' Then he said to them: "Uthmân took it unlawfully, and 'Ali is the appointed heir of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), so do something about this matter and spread it among the people. Start by criticising your governors, and show people that you are enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, so that you may gain the people's support and tell them about this matter.' Then he sent his callers and wrote to those whose beliefs he managed to corrupt in various regions, and they wrote to him."[225]

This was the beginning of the Râfiḍi movement. Those beliefs to which Ibn Saba' called people continued to spread among people of misguidance and deviation and continued to have an impact on their hearts and minds until they resulted in the murder of the Rightly Guided Caliph Dhun-Noorayn 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (رضي الله عنه) at the hands of this corrupt gang. At the time of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه), these beliefs began to appear more than before, until they reached 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), who denounced them in the strongest terms, disavowing them and those who believed in them. One of the sound reports from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) concerning that is the report narrated by Ibn 'Asâkir from 'Ammâr ad-Duhani, who said: "I heard Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl say: 'I saw al-Musayyab ibn Lajabah bringing Ibn Saba', dragging him by the collar, when 'Ali was on the minbar. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "What is the matter with him?" He said: "He is telling lies about Allah and His Messenger."'"[226] It was narrated via Yazeed ibn Wahb from Salamah from Shu'bah that 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) said: "What do I have to do with this rough black man?", referring to Abdullah ibn Saba', who used to slander Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be

pleased with them).[227] This report is proven to be from 'Ali (ﷺ) with a sound chain of narration.[228]

The historians and those who studied sects and groups narrated that Ibn Saba' claimed that 'Ali (ﷺ) was divine, so 'Ali (ﷺ) burned him and his companions with fire.[229] Al-Jurjâni said: "The Saba'is among the Râfiḍis are named after Abdullah ibn Saba', who was the first of the Râfiḍis to go beyond the pale of Islam. He said that 'Ali was the Lord of the Worlds, so 'Ali burned him and his companions with fire."[230] Al-Malṭi said, while discussing the Saba'is: "They are the followers of Abdullah ibn Saba'. They said to 'Ali: 'You.' He said: 'Who am I?' They said: 'The Creator.' He asked them to repent but they did not recant, so he lit a huge fire and burned them."[231] Some of the historians are of the view that 'Ali (ﷺ) did not burn Ibn Saba'; they say that he banished him to al-Madâ'in, and that after 'Ali (ﷺ) died, Ibn Saba' claimed that he had not died, saying to the one who announced his death: "Even if you brought us his brain wrapped in seventy cloths, we would not believe that he had died."[232]

The first view is more likely to be correct, and it is supported by what is narrated in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhâri* from 'Ikrimah who said: "Some heretics were brought to 'Ali (ﷺ), and he burned them. News of that reached Ibn 'Abbâs, who said: 'If it were me, I would not have burned them because of the prohibition of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Do not punish with the punishment of Allah." But I would have killed them, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Whoever changes his religion, execute him."'"[233] Ibn Ḥajar (may Allah have mercy on him) commented on this hadith and quoted some reports about these people who were burned, in which it was said that they were people who used to worship idols; some reports said that they were people who apostatised from Islam. Even though the reports differ as to who exactly they were, Ibn Ḥajar said after

that: "Abu al-Mudhaffar al-Isfarâyeeni said in *al-Milal wan-Niḥal* that those whom 'Ali burned were a group of the Râfiḍis who claimed that he was divine. They were the Saba'is. Their leader Abdullah ibn Saba' was a Jew who pretended to be a Muslim and introduced this idea. This may be based on what we have reported from Abu Ṭâhir al-Mukhliṣ via Abdullah ibn Shurayk al-'Âmiri who said: 'It was said to 'Ali (ﷺ): "There are some people at the door of the mosque who are claiming that you are their Lord." He called them and said: "Woe to you, what are you saying?" They said: "You are our lord, creator and provider."'"[234] Then he quoted the rest of the report, in which it says that 'Ali (ﷺ) asked them to repent three times, but they would not recant, so he burned them with fire in ditches that were dug for them. Ibn Ḥajar said: "This is a reliable chain of narration."[235]

The point here is that the beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia that have to do with exaggeration about 'Ali (ﷺ) emerged during that period, and 'Ali (ﷺ) took harsh measures in punishing them until Ibn 'Abbâs said what he said. 'Ali (ﷺ) also denounced all the other beliefs that appeared during his time under the umbrella of loving and supporting him, such as preferring him to the rest of the Companions and giving him precedence over Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). The practice of reviling and disparaging the Companions was widespread among these misguided people. Ibn Taymiyah said: "When the Shia introduced innovations during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), he opposed them. There were three groups: the extreme group, those who reviled the Companions, and those who gave precedence to 'Ali (ﷺ). As for the extreme group, he burned them with fire. He went out one day from the gate of Kindah, and some people prostrated to him. He said: 'What is this?' They said: 'You are Allah.' He asked them to repent three times, but they did not recant, so the third time he ordered that ditches be dug and fire be lit in them, then he threw them into them.

As for those who reviled the Companions, when news reached him of the one who reviled Abu Bakr and 'Umar, he wanted to kill him, but the man fled to Qarqaysiya' and (the governor there) spoke to him concerning him. 'Ali (ﷺ) was very careful with his governors, because he was not in full control, and they did not obey him in everything he instructed them to do. As for those who gave him precedence, he said: 'No one who prefers me over Abu Bakr and 'Umar is brought to me but I shall flog him as the ḥadd punishment for fabricators or liars.' It was narrated from him with more than eighty chains of narration that he said: 'The best of this Ummah after its Prophet is Abu Bakr, then 'Umar.'"[236]

Whatever the case may be, the beliefs of the Râfiḍis that appeared at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ) were limited to a few individuals; they did not reach the level of becoming a group or sect. When 'Ali's caliphate came to an end, the situation was still like this.

Dr. Sa'di al-Hâshimi wrote an essay on the ideology of Ibn Saba' and the innovations that he promoted, entitled 'Ibn Saba' is a Reality, not Myth', and he quoted it in his book *Narrators Who Were Influenced by Ibn Saba'*. The most significant innovation that was promoted by Ibn Saba' was the idea of appointing an heir. He was the first one to say that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali as his heir and that he was to be his successor in ruling his Ummah after his death, according to an instruction in which 'Ali was mentioned by name. He was also the first one to disavow the enemies of 'Ali (ﷺ), according to his claim; he took a stand against them and deemed them to be disbelievers. He was the first to say that 'Ali (ﷺ) was divine and the first one among the extreme Shia to claim to be a prophet. He introduced the idea that 'Ali (ﷺ) would return to this world after he died and that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would return. He was the first one to claim that 'Ali was the 'beast of the earth'[237] and that he was the one who created the universe and

granted provision. The Saba'is said that they would not die and that they would fly after death, so they were referred to as something that flies. Some of the Saba'is believed in the passing of the spirit from one Imam to another, and they believed in the passing of souls from one body to another at death. The Saba'is said: "We have been guided to revelation from which people have gone astray and to knowledge that is hidden from them." They said that 'Ali is in the clouds, that the thunder is his voice and that the lightning is his whip. These are the most prominent innovations believed by Ibn Saba' and his followers, and they became extremists as a result.[238]

The Râfiḍi Shiite sect, as an ideology and belief, did not appear all at once; it took time and went through various stages. The initial Shiite Râfiḍi beliefs and basic principles appeared at the hands of the Saba'is, as is admitted in the Shiite books, which say that Ibn Saba' was the first one to state that the imamate of 'Ali was a must and that 'Ali was the appointed heir of Muhammad, as we have seen above. According to this belief, there were instructions from the Prophet (ﷺ) that mentioned 'Ali by name and stated that he was to be the Imam or caliph. This is the basis of Râfiḍi Shiism, as the Râfiḍi shaykhs see it. Abu al-Ḥasan said in *al-Kâfi*: "The imamate of 'Ali was written in all the books of the prophets, and Allah never sent any Messenger without telling him of the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the imamate of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه)."[239]

The books of the Râfiḍi Shia, as we shall see below, testify that Ibn Saba' and his group were the first ones to begin reviling Abu Bakr, Umar and 'Uthmân, the in-laws, relatives and caliphs of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the closest of people to him, and reviling other Companions. This is the belief of the Râfiḍi Shia about the Companions, as it appears in their reference books.

Ibn Saba' believed that 'Ali would return,[240] and the return of 'Ali is one of the basic beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia, as we shall see

below. Ibn Saba' also believed that 'Ali and Ahl al-Bayt were given secret knowledge that was exclusive to them, as was mentioned by al-Ḥasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah[241] in *Risâlat al-Irja'*.[242] This issue became one of the basic beliefs of the Shia. There is a proven report in *Sahih Bukhari* which indicates that this belief appeared at an early stage, and that 'Ali (ﷺ) was asked about it. It was said to him: "Do you have anything (of knowledge) that is not in the Qur'an and is not known to people?" He denied that categorically.[243]

These are the most important of the basic principles in which the Râfiḍi Shia believe.[244] These ideas came into existence after the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and during the caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ), but they were not embraced by a particular, known group. As soon as the Saba'is began to raise their heads, Ali (ﷺ) fought them, as we have seen. Later, though, events took place that created the right environment for these beliefs to surface and take the shape of a group; these incidents included the battle of Ṣiffeen and the arbitration that followed it, as well as the killing of 'Ali and al-Ḥasan.

All these events created passion, sympathy and love for Ahl al-Bayt, and these new ideas snuck in under the pretext of support and love for 'Ali (ﷺ) and the members of his family. Shiism became a means for everyone who wanted to destroy Islam, whether he was a heretic or a hypocrite or an evildoer. It introduced to the Muslims foreign ideas and beliefs in the name of love for 'Ali and Ahl al-Bayt, and it made it easy for these ideas to penetrate smoothly in that guise. Ibn Saba' had many successors, so with the passage of time, this innovation began to broaden and its danger became great. At the time of 'Ali (ﷺ), the word Shia was used only in the sense of love and support for 'Ali (ﷺ), and it did not mean believing in any of the ideas of the Râfiḍi Shia as they are known today at all.[245]

Shiism in the sense of love for Ahl al-Bayt is something natural. It is love that does not differentiate among the different members of the Prophet's family and does not exaggerate about them or undermine any of the Companions, as the groups that are attributed to Shiism do. The love of Ahl al-Bayt grew and increased after the pain and suffering that they went through, starting with the murder of 'Ali and then al-Ḥusayn, and so on. These incidents unleashed the emotions of the Muslims, and those who bore grudges against Islam entered through this door. The views of Ibn Saba' did not find a suitable atmosphere in which to grow and spread until after these events.

However, Shiism in the sense of believing that 'Ali (ﷺ) was mentioned by name to be the Imam or caliph and believing in the return of some of the Companions from the dead to be judged before the Day of Resurrection, in the doctrine of change in the divine will, in the hidden Imam, in the infallibility of the Imams and so on is undoubtedly a set of beliefs for which Allah (ﷻ) has revealed no authority, and these beliefs are foreign to the Muslims. Their origins go back to various sources, because many people rode the wave of Shiism — people who wanted to plot against Islam and its people and who wanted to be able to continue living in the shade of their previous beliefs in the name of Islam, whether they were Jews, Christians, Magians or something else. Many corrupt beliefs were introduced into Shiism, as we shall see below when we study their basic beliefs. Ibn Taymiyah was of the view that those who claimed to be Shia had adopted ideas from the Persians, Byzantines, Greeks, Christians, Jews and others and mixed them with Shiism. He said: "This is a confirmation of what the Prophet (ﷺ) said," and he quoted some hadiths saying that this Ummah would follow in the footsteps of those who came before them. He also said that this happened with those who claimed to be Shia.[246]

2.3. Stages that the Râfiḍi Shia went through

The Râfiḍi Shia went through a number of stages in their development before they became an independent group with distinct beliefs and a distinct name, separate from the other groups of the Ummah. We may highlight four main stages of that development:

2.3.1.

The call of Abdullah ibn Saba' to whatever he promoted of basic beliefs on which Râfiḍi doctrine was based, such as his promotion of the belief that some Companions would return from the dead to be judged before the Day of Resurrection, his introduction of the idea that the Prophet (ﷺ) had appointed 'Ali to be his successor, and his slandering of the caliphs who came before 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). Two things helped Ibn Saba' to promote his misguided ideas, which are far from the spirit of Islam:

(a) He chose a suitable environment. He spread his call in Egypt and Iraq and moved between these regions a great deal, as is mentioned by aṭ-Ṭabari.[247] This appeal developed in societies that had not managed to understand Islam properly and did not have deep knowledge of the religion of Allah (ﷻ) because they were new to Islam. Those regions had only been conquered at the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), and the people were far away from the society of the Companions in the area around Makkah and Madinah, so they did not learn and study at their hands.

(b) By way of trickery and deceit, he concealed his call and operated in secrecy. His call was not directed to everyone; it was only directed to those whom he knew would accept it, such as ignorant people and those with evil motives who had only entered Islam in order to plot against its people,

after the Muslim armies had destroyed the thrones of their kings and conquered their lands. We have seen above what aṭ-Ṭabari said about Ibn Saba': "He spread his call and wrote to those whom he managed to corrupt in other regions, and they wrote to him. They called people in secret to their ideas."[248] Aṭ-Ṭabari said, describing them: "They started spreading a lot of rumours (against the governors) in Muslim lands, but their real aim was different from what they showed."[249]

2.3.2.

The second stage came when they started promoting their beliefs openly. This came after the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), when the Companions (ﷺ) were focusing on suppressing the unrest that had resulted in his murder. These misguided people found breathing space in those circumstances, and their corrupt beliefs grew strong and became deeply rooted in their hearts, but these beliefs were still limited to a small, specific group of those whom Ibn Saba' himself had taught. They had no power or influence with anyone apart from those of the rebel thugs who joined them in the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). What is indicative of that is what was narrated by aṭ-Ṭabari: "Ibn Saba' spoke and said: 'O people, your victory could come by mixing with the people, so show kindness to them.'"[250] Such words would not be said by one who was in a position of power or influence. Yet no one denies the role played by these Saba'is and the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) in fanning the flames of war among the Companions; this was stated by scholars who studied the fitnah and its events. Ibn Ḥazm says, confirming this: "The proof of that is that the two armies came together (at the Battle of the Camel) and did not fight, but at night the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) realised that the two parties were going to be united against them, so they attacked the

camp of Talhah and az-Zubayr at night, wielding their swords against them, and the people had to defend themselves."[251]

2.3.3.

The third stage involved their gaining strength and power and rallying behind one leader. This happened after the murder of al-Ḥusayn (ﷺ), and the purpose was to avenge al-Ḥusayn by retaliating against his enemies. Aṭ-Ṭabari says concerning the events of 64 AH: "In this year, the Shia began to mobilise in Kufah, preparing to meet in an-Nakheelah in 65 AH in order to march on the Syrians in a quest for vengeance for the blood of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali. They corresponded with one another concerning that."[252]

Their story was narrated by aṭ-Ṭabari in a report from Abdullah ibn 'Awf ibn al-Aḥmar al-Azdi, who said: "When al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali was killed and Ibn Ziyâd returned from his camp in an-Nakheelah and entered Kufah, the Shia met and blamed themselves, regretting what had happened. They thought that they had made a grievous mistake by calling al-Ḥusayn and promising support, then abandoning him so that he was killed near them without their lending him any support. They thought that nothing could erase their shame and the sin resulting from his murder except killing the ones who had killed him or being killed in the attempt. So in Kufah, they turned to five people who were leaders of the Shia: Sulaymân ibn Ṣurad al-Khuzâ'i, who had met the Prophet (ﷺ); al-Musayyab ibn Najiyyah al-Fizâri, who had been one of the most prominent companions of 'Ali (ﷺ); Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Nufayl al-Azdi; Abdullah ibn Wâ'il at-Taymi; and Rifâ'ah ibn Shaddâd al-Bajali. These five people then met in the house of Sulaymân ibn Ṣurad. They were among the most prominent of 'Ali's companions, and they were joined by some of the most prominent of the Shia."[253]

This meeting was public and included all the Shia. Approximately seventeen thousand rallied behind Sulaymân, but he was not happy with their small numbers. He sent Ḥakeem ibn Munqidh to give the call in Kufah, and the people came out to join them until their number reached nearly twenty thousand.[254] During this time, al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafi came to Kufah and found that the Shia had rallied behind Sulaymân ibn Ṣurad; they were showing him a great deal of respect and were preparing for war. When al-Mukhtâr settled among them in Kufah, he called for the imamate of al-Mahdi Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, namely Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah; he called him al-Mahdi, and many of the Shia followed him in that, leaving Sulaymân ibn Ṣurad.

Thus the Shia split into two groups. The majority of them were with Sulaymân, wanting to go out to fight people so that they could avenge the murder of al-Ḥusayn. Another group was with al-Mukhtâr, wanting to proclaim the imamate of Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah, albeit without any instruction from Ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah himself; they attributed that to him in order to deceive the people and achieve their corrupt ulterior motives.[255] This is how the Shia began to come together.

Then the historians tell us that Sulaymân ibn Ṣurad set out for Syria with those Shia who were still with him. They met the Syrians at a spring called 'Ayn al-Wardah, where a great battle took place that lasted for three days. Ibn Katheer said: "No one, old or young, had ever seen anything like that day, when nothing interrupted the fighting except the times for prayer, until night fell."[256] The fighting between them ended with the killing of Sulaymân ibn Ṣurad (may Allah have mercy on him) and many of his companions; they were defeated, and those of his companions who were left returned to Kufah.[257]

As for al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafi, when those who survived of Sulaymân's army returned to Kufah, they told him what had befallen them. He prayed for mercy for Sulaymân and those who had been killed with him and said: "I am the trusted leader who will kill the corrupt tyrants inshallah. Get ready and prepare yourselves, and be of good cheer." Ibn Katheer said: "Before (the defeated army) arrived, he had told the people that they had been defeated on the basis of revelation that he had received from Satan, as a devil used to come to him and reveal things to him in a manner similar to the way Satan used to reveal things to Musaylimah."[258] Al-Mukhtar sent instructions to different regions, cities and towns in Iraq and Khorasan and organised his army. Then he started to pursue the murderers of al-Ḥusayn, whether they were of prominent or lowly position, and kill them.[259]

2.3.4.

The fourth stage was the split of the Râfiḍi Shia from the Zaydis and other Shia groups, and their becoming distinct in name and beliefs. That happened specifically in 121 AH, when Zayd ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn rebelled against Hishâm ibn 'Abdul-Malik, as mentioned previously.[260] Some of the Shia in his army openly reviled Abu Bakr and 'Umar. He told them not to do that and denounced them, but they rejected (*rafaḍa*) what he said and thus became known as Râfiḍis, while the group that remained with him became known as Zaydis.[261] Ibn Taymiyah said: "The first time that the word Râfiḍi was known in Islam was when Zayd ibn 'Ali rebelled at the beginning of the second century AH. He was asked about Abu Bakr and 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما), and he expressed love and respect for them, but some people rejected him and became known as Râfiḍis."[262] He said: "From the time of Zayd's rebellion, the Shia split into Râfiḍis and Zaydis. When Zayd was asked about Abu Bakr and 'Umar, he prayed for mercy for them, and some people rejected that. He said to

them: 'You have rejected me.' So they were called Râfiḍis because of their rejection of him, and those Shia who did not reject him were called Zaydis, after him."[263] From that date, the Râfiḍis became distinct from other Shia groups and became a separate sect with their own name and beliefs.[264] And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

The scholars who discussed different sects talked about different groups which claimed to be Shia, among whom they mentioned the Saba'is, the Ghurâbis, the Bayâtis, the Mugheeris, the Hâshimis, the Khaṭṭâbis, the 'Ilbâ'is, the Kaysânis, the Zaydis, the Jaroodis, the Sulaymânis, the Ṣâliḥis and the Batris. Some of these groups went to extremes, and others were less extreme. The one who wants to know more about them may refer to *Maqâlât al-Islâmiyyeen* by Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari, *al-Milal wan-Niḥal* by ash-Shahrastâni, *Al-Farq bayna al-Firaq* by Abudh-Dhâhir al-Baghdadi and *Firaq Mu'âṣirah* by Dr. Ghâlib ibn 'Ali 'Awâji, who is one of the best contemporary writers I have come across.

3. Beliefs of the Imami Râfiḍi Shia

The Twelver Râfiḍi Shia believe that imamate is an important pillar of Islam and one of the fundamentals of faith; a person's faith is not complete, and no deed may be accepted from him, unless he believes in it. The first person who spoke of the concept of imamate as believed in by the Râfiḍi Shia was Ibn Saba'. He spread the idea that imamate was something about which the Prophet (ﷺ) gave instructions, that it is limited to the one whom he mentioned in those instructions (the appointed heir), and that if anyone other than him takes the position of imamate (or caliphate), he must be disavowed and regarded as a disbeliever.

The books of the Shia admit that Ibn Saba' was the first one to spread the idea of 'Ali's imamate being obligatory, openly

disavowing his enemies, standing up to his opponents and denouncing them as disbelievers.[265] He was of Jewish origin, and he believed that the one who was instructed by Moosa to take his place was Joshua; when he became Muslim he applied this same idea to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib.[266] This is what was agreed upon by the shaykhs of the Râfiḍi Shia.

Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi recorded the beliefs of the Shia in the fourth century AH, and he said that they believed that every prophet had an appointed heir whom Allah (ﷻ) instructed should come after the prophet.[267] He stated that the number of appointed heirs was 124,000.[268] Al-Majlisi stated in his *Akhbâr* that 'Ali was the last of the appointed heirs.[269] One of the chapter headings in *al-Kâfi* says: "Imamate is a covenant from Allah (ﷻ), which is passed on from one to another."[270] Another heading says: "What Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger instructed with regard to the Imams and mentioning their names one after another."[271] He included a number of their reports, which they regard as evidence beyond any shadow of a doubt.

Hence their shaykh Miqdâd al-Ḥilli (d. 821 AH) said: "The one who is entitled to the position of imamate has to be a man who is appointed by Allah and His Messenger, not just by any man."[272] Muhammad Ḥusayn Âl Kâshif al-Ghaṭa', one of the senior religious authorities of the Twelver Shia in modern times, stated: "Imamate is a divinely-appointed position like prophethood. Just as Allah chooses whomever He wills among His slaves for prophethood and messengership and supports them with miracles which are like a statement from Allah concerning him, so He also chooses for imamate whomever He wills and enjoins His Prophet to mention him by name as his successor and issue instructions that he should be a leader (Imam) for people after he is gone."[273]

So you see that the concept of imamate in their view is like the concept of prophethood. Just as Allah chose prophets from among

His creation, He also chooses Imams, mentioning them by name, telling mankind about them, establishing proof through them, supporting them with miracles, and sending down Books and revelation to them. They do not say or do anything except by the command and revelation of Allah. In other words, imamate is the same as prophethood, and the Imam is a Prophet; the change is in name only.

Hence al-Majlisi said: "Trying to work out the difference between a Prophet and an Imam based on these reports may be problematic."[274] Then he said: "We do not know the reason why they are not given the title of prophet except as a kind of respect to the Seal of the Prophets; our minds cannot fathom the difference between prophethood and imamate."[275] This is what they say with regard to the concept of imamate, and it is sufficient criticism of it that they have no support for this view except (the words of) Ibn Saba', the Jew.[276]

3.1. The status of the Imam in their view, and the ruling on the one who denies it

For the Sunnis, the issue of imamate (caliphate or rulership) is not one of the basic fundamentals of religion that a Muslim cannot afford to be unaware of, and this has been stated by a number of scholars.[277] According to the Râfiḍi Shia, though, it is something else altogether. In *al-Kâfi*, there are reports that describe imamate as the greatest pillar of Islam. Al-Kulayni narrated, with his chain of narration from Abu Ja'far, that the latter said: "Islam is built on five (pillars): the prayer, zakâh, fasting, hajj and imamate. There is no issue that is emphasised as much in Islam as imamate. The people took four and they abandoned this — meaning imamate."[278]

You can see that they dropped the twin declaration of faith from the five pillars of Islam and replaced it with imamate, which they regard as the greatest of the pillars, as is indicated by their

saying: "There is no issue that is emphasised as much in Islam as imamate," and by other words of theirs, such as the text quoted above, to which the narrator added: "I said: 'Which is the best of these?' He said: 'Imamate is the best.'"[279]

Al-Majlisi said: "No doubt belief in the imamate of the Imams and submitting to their authority are among the fundamentals of faith, and better than all physical acts of worship because these are the starting point."[280]

Al-Mudhaffar, who is one of their contemporary scholars, says: "We believe that imamate is one of the fundamentals of religion, and that faith is not complete without believing in it. It is not permissible to imitate parents, family or educators, no matter how great they are; rather it is essential to examine the issue, just as it is essential to examine the issues of tawḥeed and prophethood."[281] The reports go even further than that, as they say: "The Prophet (ﷺ) taught more about the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams who came after him than he taught about obligatory duties."[282]

These reports of the Râfiḍi Shia, and others like them in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia, were enough to make the issue of imamate the criterion to judge whether a man was a believer or a disbeliever, and to leave the Muslim exposed to accusations of disbelief for merely differing with the Imami Shia with regard to the issue of imamate, in which they believe. Hence we see some senior Shiite scholars, both earlier and later, frankly stating this bitter truth.

Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi said, in his essay *al-I'tiqâdât*: "Our belief about those who deny the imamate of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) is the same as that about one who denies the prophethood of all the prophets, and our belief about the one who affirms the imamate of 'Ali and denies one of the Imams who came after him is that he is like one who affirms all the prophets but denies the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ)."[283]

Yoosuf al-Baḥrâni says in his encyclopaedia *al-Ḥadâ'iq an-Nâḍirah fi Aḥkâm al-'Itrah aṭ-Ṭâhirah*: "I wonder what difference there is between one who disbelieves in Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, and one who disbelieves in the Imams, even though it is proven that imamate is one of the fundamentals of religion."[284]

Al-Majlisi says: "It should be noted that the fact that the words polytheism and disbelief are applied to the one who does not believe in the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams who are descended from him, and believes that others are superior to them, indicates that they will abide forever in hell."[285]

Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli said: "Imamate is a general mercy, and prophethood is a more specific mercy, because it is possible for there to be a time without a living prophet, which is not the case with regard to the Imam. Denying general mercy is worse than denying specific mercy."[286]

He describes the one who does not believe in their Imams as being worse in disbelief than the Jews and Christians. Based on that, he says that there should never be any time without an Imam. This is a reference to their belief in the existence of a hidden, awaited Imam, which is something that is rejected by many Shiite groups. The scholars of genealogy and history who examined this issue stated that this Imam was never even born, but here a shaykh of the Râfiḍi Shia says that denying him is worse than disbelief![287]

Their shaykh, al-Mufeed, stated that there was consensus among them on this view of regarding the Ummah of Islam as disbelievers. He says: "The Imamis are agreed that the one who denies the imamate of one of the Imams, and rejects what Allah (ﷻ) has enjoined upon him of obedience to the Imams, is a misguided disbeliever who deserves to abide forever in hell."[288] The matter went so far that their shaykh Ni'matullah al-Jazâ'iri declared the Shia

to be separate from the Muslims because of the issue of imamate. He said: "We do not have either a God or a Prophet or an Imam in common with them, because they say that their Lord is the one Whose Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is, and his successor who came after him was Abu Bakr, but we do not believe in that Lord or in that Prophet; rather we say that the Lord whose Prophet's successor was Abu Bakr is not our Lord, and that Prophet is not our Prophet."[289]

So imamate is at the same level as prophethood, if not greater. It is the basic foundation of religion, in their view. Hence the ruling of the Twelver Shia against anyone who denied the imamate of any one of their twelve Imams gave the final shape to their extremism, as they deemed him to be a disbeliever who was doomed to spend eternity in hell, and they included in their curses and rulings of apostasy all Muslim groups except the Twelvers. They included in their denunciation as disbelievers all of the following:

3.1.1. Their denunciation of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)

The books of the Râfiḍi Shia are filled with curses and condemnation as disbelievers for those with whom Allah (ﷻ) is pleased and who are pleased with Him: the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, those who were present at Badr, those who swore allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the pledge of Raḍwân, and the rest of the Companions, with only a very few exceptions who can be counted on the fingers of one hand. After it appeared in their books and became widely known, this became one of the issues that could not be concealed by means of taqiyyah.[290]

Some of the scholars who studied Shiite sects and groups examined this issue among the Twelver Shia. Al-Qâḍi 'Abdul-Jabbâr said: "As for the Imamis, they are of the view that the way to prove the imamate of the twelve Imams is by means of the clear text that denounces as disbelievers those who deny it, as they must be

denounced as disbelievers. Hence they regard the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) as disbelievers."[291] Something similar was said by 'Abdul-Qâhir al-Baghdadi.

As for the Imamis, most of them[292] claimed that the Companions apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), except for 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), his two sons and a small number of others, making a total of thirteen.[293] Ibn Taymiyah said: "The Râfiḍis say that the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr concealed the Prophet's clear instructions (to appoint 'Ali as caliph) and disbelieved, apart from a small group, a little over ten or more. Then they said: 'Abu Bakr, 'Umar and others like them had always been hypocrites,' and they said: 'Rather, they believed then they disbelieved.' The books of the Twelvers say that the Companions apostatised because they appointed Abu Bakr as caliph, with the exception of three of them. Some of their reports add three or four others to Imam 'Ali, bringing the total to seven, but they did not add more than that. The Shia narrated this myth in their so-called reliable books and recorded it in the first book of theirs that appeared, which was the book of Sulaym ibn Qays."[294]

Then their books came one after another to confirm and propagate this idea. Foremost among them are *al-Kâfi*, which is regarded as the most authentic of their four books; *Rijâl al-Kashshi*,[295] which is their main reference concerning the biographies of narrators; and other references of theirs.[296] We will discuss the attitude of the Râfiḍi Shia towards the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in detail below.

3.1.2. Their denunciation of Ahl al-Bayt as disbelievers

The reports accusing the members of that unique and ideal society of apostasy do not make exceptions for any of them except seven individuals, according to the highest estimate. These seven do

not include any member of the household of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), apart from a few of their reports which make an exception only for 'Ali (ﷺ). This is the report of al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasâr from Abu Ja'far, who said: "All of the people became people of ignorance except four: 'Ali, al-Miqdâd, Salmân and Abu Dharr. I (al-Fuḍayl) said: 'And 'Ammâr?' He said: 'If you want those who never faltered at all, then it is these three.'"[297]

The verdict of apostasy in these texts includes all of the Companions and the household of the Prophet, such as the wives and relatives of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), even though the fabricator claims to be a supporter of Ahl al-Bayt. This is clear evidence that claiming to be supporters of the Prophet's household (Shiism) was no more than a cover under which to carry out evil ulterior motives against Islam and its people, and that the fabricators of these reports were enemies of the Companions and relatives of the Prophet (ﷺ).[298]

The Râfiḍi Shia focused their slander and accusations of disbelief on a number of the members of the family of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They said that the verse ﴿And whoever is blind in this world [i.e., does not see Allah's Signs and believes not in Him], will be blind in the hereafter, and more astray from the Path﴾ *(Qur'an 17: 72)* was revealed concerning his paternal uncle al-'Abbâs. They also singled out Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, the scholar of the Ummah and the interpreter of the Qur'an; they cursed him and described him as a 'foolish man',[299] as it says in *al-Kâfi*. In *Rijâl al-Kashshi*, it says: "O Allah, curse the two sons of so-and-so, blind them as You blinded their hearts, and make the blindness of their eyes a proof of the blindness of their hearts."[300] Their Shaykh Ḥasan al-Mustafawi commented on this: "They are Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs and 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abbâs."[301]

The daughters of the Prophet (ﷺ) are also included in the hatred and resentment of the Twelver Shia, who do not mention them

among those excluded from their accusations of becoming disbelievers (after the death of the Prophet). Some of them even denied that the Prophet (ﷺ) had any daughters apart from Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها).[302] Can the one who says such things about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his daughters really love the Messenger of Allah?[303]

The author of *al-Kâfi* said in his reports that everyone who does not believe in the twelve Imams is a disbeliever, even if he is descended from 'Ali and Fâṭimah.[304] In reality, this implies that the entire generation of the Companions and those who came after them, including Ahl al-Bayt and the Companions, are disbelievers because they did not know about the idea of the twelve Imams, which did not exist until after 260 AH.

This also implies that the Mothers of the Believers, the wives of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), were disbelievers, since they did not exempt a single one of them in their texts. They particularly focused on 'Â'ishah[305] and Ḥafṣah[306] (may Allah be pleased with them) for their criticism, curses and denunciation as disbelievers.[307] Their shaykh al-Majlisi wrote a chapter entitled *Bâb Aḥwâl 'Â'ishah wa Ḥafṣah* in which he quoted seventeen reports,[308] and referred the reader to more reports in other chapters,[309] which offend the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with regard to the members of his household, in the most abhorrent terms. In their reports, they even accused the one whom Allah (ﷻ) declared to be innocent from above seven heavens, 'Â'ishah bint aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, of immoral conduct. In the most prominent of their tafseers, *Tafseer al-Qummi*,[310] there is a horrible slander which implies disbelief in the noble Qur'an. Ibn Katheer said in his commentary on Soorat an-Noor: "The scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) are unanimously agreed that the one who reviles her and accuses her after this which is mentioned in this verse is a disbeliever, because he is stubbornly rejecting the Qur'an."[311] Al-Qurtubi said: "Everyone who reviles her by accusing

her of that which Allah (ﷻ) has declared her innocent of is disbelieving Allah (ﷻ), and whoever disbelieves Allah (ﷻ) is a disbeliever."[312]

3.1.3. Their denunciation of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and their governments as disbelievers

According to the Imami Râfiḍi Shiite religion, any government other than an Imami Râfiḍi government is invalid; its ruler is an unjust oppressor who is being worshipped instead of Allah (ﷻ), and the one who swears allegiance to him is worshipping something other than Allah (ﷻ). Al-Kulayni confirms this in a number of chapters, such as his chapter on "One who claims to be a ruler but is not qualified to rule, one who denies the Imams or some of them, and one who affirms the imamate (rulership) of one who is not qualified for it," in which he mentions twelve hadiths from their Imams;[313] and his chapter on "The one who accepts the authority of the ruler who has no sanction from Allah (ﷻ)," which includes five hadiths.[314]

According to their point of view, all the caliphs of the Muslims — apart from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and al-Ḥasan — are unjust and evil, even if they call people to the truth, treat Ahl al-Bayt kindly and establish the religion of Allah (ﷻ). They say, "Every banner that is raised before the banner of the awaited Mahdi, the one who raises it is unjust and evil."[315] The commentator on *al-Kâfi* said: "Even if the one who raises it calls people to the truth."[316] Al-Majlisi deemed this report to be sound[317] according to their standards.[318]

3.1.4. Judging Islamic regions to be 'the abode of disbelief'

In some of their reports, many Muslim countries are singled out for slander, and their people are deemed to be disbelievers in

particular. Usually they target regions where the people are adhering more to Islam and following the Sunnah. They stated that the people of Makkah and Madinah were disbelievers during the best generations. At the time of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, they said of the people of Makkah and Madinah: "The people of Syria are worse than the people of Byzantium (meaning, worse than the Christians); the people of Madinah are worse than the people of Makkah, and the people of Makkah openly show disbelief in Allah."[319] They also said: "The people of Makkah openly show disbelief in Allah, and the people of Madinah are more evil than the people of Makkah, seventy times more evil."[320]

It is well known that the people of Madinah, especially during the best generations, were following in the footsteps of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) more than the people of other regions, and the people of Madinah continued to adhere to their Mâliki madh-hab until the beginning of the sixth century AH or thereabouts, when some of the Râfiḍis from the east came and corrupted many of them.[321]

They said of Egypt and its people: "The sons of Egypt are cursed on the lips of Dâwood (ﷺ), and Allah (ﷻ) turned some of them into monkeys and pigs."[322]They said: "When Allah (ﷻ) got angry with the children of Israel, He caused them to enter Egypt, and when He was pleased with them, He caused them to leave it."[323] They also said: "What a bad land Egypt is. It was a prison for those of the children of Israel with whom Allah (ﷻ) was angry."[324]And they said: "Avoid Egypt and do not seek to stay there, because staying there makes one a cuckold."[325]

They have a number of reports that criticise Egypt, slander its people and warn against living there. They attribute these reports to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Muhammad al-Bâqir and 'Ali al-Bâqir. This was the Râfiḍi view of Egypt at the time when Islam was

flourishing. Al-Majlisi commented on these texts by saying that Egypt had "become one of the worst of lands at that time, because its people were among the most wretched and doomed of disbelievers."[326]

These texts express the Râfiḍi's resentment and grudges against Egypt and its people, and it is not far-fetched to suggest that these feelings were due to the fall of the state of their brethren the Ismaili 'Ubaydis at the hand of Saladin, who cleansed Egypt of their filth and impurity. What comparison can there be between these unjust words against Egypt and its people and the chapter that Muslim included in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* under the title "The Prophet's instructions to be kind to the people of Egypt"?[327] The Râfiḍis criticised many regions of the Islamic world and their people,[328] and they did not exempt anyone except those who followed their sect, who were very few at that time. It is even narrated that they said: "Allah commanded people to love and support us and offered that to the people of different regions, but no one accepted it except the people of Kufah."[329]

3.1.5. The Muslim judges

Their reports regard the Muslim judges as evildoers because of their connection to the caliphate, which they see as a 'false authority'. It is narrated in *al-Kâfi* that 'Umar ibn Handhalah said: "I asked Abu Abdullah (ﷺ) about two of our companions who had a dispute about a debt or inheritance, and they referred their case to the ruler and to the judge; is that permissible?" He said: "Whoever refers to them for judgement, whether the case is valid or not, he is referring for judgement to false judges. Whatever is ruled in his favour, he is only taking something harâm, even if it is his proven right, because he is taking it on the basis of the ruling of false judges, and Allah has enjoined us to reject it."[330] Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And they wish to go for

judgement [in their disputes] to the *Ṭâghoot* [false judges] while they have been ordered to reject them﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 60)*. This report criticises the judges and judiciary system at the time of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, as is clear from their chains of narration going back to him. If this was their opinion of the Muslim judges during the best generations, then what do you think is the opinion about those who came after them?[331]

3.1.6. The imams and scholars of the Muslims

They warned against learning from the shaykhs and scholars of the Muslims, regarding them as people of polytheism. It was narrated that Haroon ibn Khârijah said: "I said to Abu Abdullah (ﷺ): 'We go to those people who differ from us[332] and listen to their talk, so that it might be proof for us against them.' He said: 'Do not go to them and do not listen to them, may Allah curse them and their polytheist ways.'"[333] In *al-Kâfi*, it is narrated from Sudayr that Abu Ja'far said: "O Sudayr, shall I show you those who divert people away from the religion of Allah?" Then he looked towards Abu Ḥaneefah and Sufyân ath-Thawri, who were sitting in circles in the mosque, and he said: "These are the ones who divert people away from the religion of Allah without knowledge, or guidance, or a Book giving light.[334] These are the evildoers; if they sat at home, people would look for someone to learn from, and they would not find anyone tell to them about Allah (ﷻ) or about His Messenger (ﷺ), so they would come to us, and we would tell them about Allah (ﷻ) and about His Messenger (ﷺ)."[335]

Ibn Taymiyah explained their attitude towards the early generations and leading scholars of this Ummah, the Anṣâr, and those who followed them in truth, those with whom Allah is pleased and who are pleased with Him. They describe as disbelievers the majority of the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ), both the earlier and later

generations. They describe as disbelievers everyone who believes Abu Bakr, 'Umar, the Muhâjireen and the Anṣâr to be of good character, or who is pleased with them as Allah (ﷻ) is pleased with them, or who prays for forgiveness for them as Allah (ﷻ) has enjoined us to pray for forgiveness for them. Hence they regard as disbelievers the most prominent scholars of the Ummah, such as Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, Abu Muslim al-Khawlâni, Uways al-Qurani, 'Aṭa' ibn Abi Rabâḥ and Ibrâheem an-Nakha'i, as well as Imam Mâlik, al-Awzâ'i, Imam Abu Ḥaneefah, Ḥammâd ibn Zayd, Ḥammâd ibn Salamah, ath-Thawri, Imam ash-Shâfa'i, Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyâḍ, Abu Sulaymân ad-Dârâni, Ma'roof al-Karkhi, al-Junayd ibn Muhammad, Sahl ibn Abdullah at-Tastari and others.

This alleged disbelief is worse than that of the Jews and Christians, because the latter in their view are originally disbelievers, but these people are considered apostates — and according to scholarly consensus, the disbelief of apostasy is worse than original disbelief. Most of their scholars regard Abu Bakr, 'Umar, the majority of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) such as 'Â'ishah and Ḥafṣah, the rest of the leaders and scholars of the Muslims and their common folk as not having believed in Allah (ﷻ) even for a second, because faith which is followed by disbelief, in their view, is invalid in the first place. Some of them even suggest that the private parts of the Prophet (ﷺ), with which he had intimate relations with 'Â'ishah and Ḥafṣah, should be touched by fire in order to be purified from having had intercourse with women whom they claim to be disbelievers, because intercourse with disbelieving women is harâm in their view.[336]

No one was safe from this comprehensive denunciation of people as disbelievers. Does it need any further examination? Its falseness is too apparent to require additional explanation. Regarding the Ummah as disbelievers is an extension of regarding the

Companions as disbelievers; the reason for it is the same and not different. It is not surprising that the one who resents the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), reviles them and regards them as disbelievers will also resent the entire Ummah and regard them as disbelievers. As one of the early generation said: "Anyone who bears grudges in his heart against any of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) will have more resentment in his heart towards the Muslims."[337]

If such a person does not approve of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, those who were present at Badr, those who swore allegiance in the pledge of Raḍwân, and the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, who represent the pinnacle of virtue and goodness, will he approve of anyone after them? The basis of this attitude is the claim of the Râfiḍis that the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) denied the divine instruction appointing an heir to the Prophet (ﷺ), and we will explain that this so-called divine instruction is false on the basis of texts, reason and well known facts. What is based on falsehood is also false.

Their verdict of apostasy against the generation of the Companions is one of the clearest signs of the utter falseness of the Râfiḍi Shiite madh-hab.[338] Hence Aḥmad al-Kasrawi, an Iranian of Shiite background, said: "As for what they said about the apostasy of the Muslims after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), this is a blatant lie and fabrication on their part. One might ask: How could they apostatise when they were the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), who believed in him when others disbelieved, who protected him and put up with persecution? How could they then apostatise during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and leave their religion in order to make him the caliph? Which of the two matters is easier to believe or more likely to have happened: to disbelieve one or two men who had corrupt motives or that a few hundred of the most sincere Muslims would apostatise? Give us your answer, if you have any answer."[339]

In the noble Qur'an, Allah (ﷻ) explains the basic principles of faith, and it is an explanation or exposition of all things. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And We have sent down to you the Book [the Qur'an] as an exposition of everything﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 89)*. Allah (ﷻ) says, describing His Book, that it omits no matter on which religion is based: ﴾We have neglected nothing in the Book﴿ *(Qur'an 6: 38)*. If that is the case, one may wonder: what is the basis of Shiite beliefs? The sacred book of Islam, the Qur'an, mentions prayer, fasting, zakâh and hajj many times, but it makes no reference to the twelve Imams or to the imamate (caliphate) after the Messenger, even though the imamate — according to the theory of the Râfiḍi Shia — is the most important pillar of Islam! Is it not strange that the Qur'an mentions the details of how to do wuḍoo', lists the ḥarâm types of food and drink, speaks of jihad sometimes and of peace sometimes, and discusses moral issues, but it ignores the imamate of the twelve Imams, which is described by Âl Kâshif al-Ghaṭa' as being a "divinely-ordained position like prophethood"? These Qur'anic texts clearly testify that the noble Qur'an did not neglect any issue that people need. So how could it neglect the issue of imamate, which is supposed to be based on a text? The Imami Shia talk about it and then leave it for their scholars to shape and define this idea, when the appointment of the Imams was supposed to come from Allah (ﷻ) and not from them.[340]

3.2. Infallibility according to the Râfiḍi Shia

Infallibility of the Imam, according to the Imami Râfiḍi Shia, is one of the conditions of imamate, and it is one of the basic principles and foundations of their belief. It is of major importance for them and is a result of the qualities, abilities and unlimited intellectual talents that the Shia ascribed to their Imams. They believe that the Imam is not answerable to any person, and that it is impossible for him to make a mistake, no matter how many actions

he does. It is essential to believe that everything he does is good, with nothing evil in it, because he has knowledge that no one else can possess. Hence the Shia ascribed infallibility to the Imam, among other things. They believe that the Imams are infallible throughout their lives and do not commit any sin, major or minor. They commit no act of disobedience, and it is not possible for them to make mistakes or forget.[341]

Their Shaykh al-Mufeed narrated that there was consensus on this point, and he said: "The Imams, who take the place of the prophets in fulfilling Sharia rulings, carrying out ḥadd punishments, protecting the religion of Islam and disciplining the people, are infallible like the prophets. It is not possible for them to commit any major or minor sin, and it is not possible for them to be forgetful or make mistakes in any matter of religion or rulings. This is the view of all the Imamiyyah, except for those who are regarded as odd among them and adhered to the apparent meaning of some reports that could have an interpretation different than their corrupt understanding in this regard."[342] Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli said: "The Imamis and Ismailis are of the view that the Imam must be infallible, and they differed in that from all other groups."[343]

This was also stated by al-Majlisi when he said: "It should be noted that the Imamis, may Allah be pleased with them, agree on the infallibility of the Imams (ﷺ), who are free from sin, both minor and major. They do not commit any sin at all, whether deliberately, or because of forgetfulness or mistakes in interpretation, or because Allah (ﷻ) caused them to forget."[344]

Aṣ-Ṣadooq narrated with a chain of narration going back — falsely — to Ibn 'Abbâs that he said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'I, along with 'Ali, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and nine of the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, are infallible.'"[345] He also said, affirming that: "Our belief concerning the Prophets, Messengers and Imams is

that they are infallible and purified from all impurity. They do not commit sin, minor or major; they do not disobey Allah (ﷻ) in what He commands them; and they do what they are instructed. Whoever denies that they are infallible in any way is ignorant of them, and the one who is ignorant of them is a disbeliever."[346]

This belief was not limited to the early generations of the Râfiḍis; it is also shared by many contemporary Shia. Muhammad Riḍa al-Mudhaffar says: "We believe that the Imam, like the Prophet, must be infallible and protected against all things and immoral actions, both open and hidden, from childhood until death, whether those actions are deliberate or by mistake. He must also be infallible and protected against absentmindedness, mistakes and forgetfulness."[347] This was stated by az-Zanjâni in *'Aqâ'id al-Imamiyyah*[348] and also by al-Bahrâni in *Manâr al-Huda*[349] and as-Sayyid Murtaḍa al-'Askari in *Ma'âlim al-Madrasatayn*.[350]

However, there are some reports in the Imami Shiite madh-hab that contradict this view. Al-Majlisi was baffled when he saw texts that are contrary to the consensus of his companions, and he said: "The matter is very problematic because there are many reports and verses which indicate that it is possible for them to err, yet there is consensus of all our companions, except a few, that it is not possible for the Imams to err."[351] This is an admission on the part of al-Majlisi that the consensus of the later Shia on the infallibility of the Imams is contrary to their own reports. This is real life evidence and a clear admission that they may all agree on misguidance, even though there is no evidence for it in their own books.[352]

It seems that the idea of infallibility went through various stages, and that the Shia initially differed in their beliefs and definitions of infallibility. For example, during the era of Abu Ja'far ibn Bâbawayh (d. 381 AH) and his shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Qummi, the opinion of most of the Shia was that the first level of

extremism was to deny forgetfulness on the part of the Prophet (ﷺ).[353] In other words, they regarded anyone who said that the Prophet (ﷺ) could not forget as being one of the extreme Shia.

Things changed after that, and denying that the Imam could be absent-minded or could forget was equivalent to putting the Imams at the level of Allah (ﷻ), the One whom neither slumber nor sleep overtakes. Infallibility in that extreme form, denying that the Imams could be absent-minded or forgetful, was the belief of an unknown Shiite group in Kufah. In *al-Biḥâr*, al-Majlisi says: "It was said to al-Riḍa — the eighth Imam of the Shia — that there were some people in Kufah who claimed that the Prophet (ﷺ) never forgot or made a mistake in his prayer. He said: 'They are lying, may Allah (ﷻ) curse them; the One who never forgets or makes a mistake is Allah (ﷻ), besides Whom there is no other god.'"[354]

This indicates that the belief that the Imam cannot make a mistake was the belief of an unspecified group of people and was considered strange and odd. They said that the Prophet (ﷺ), who was the best of the Imams, could not make mistakes, but they did not say that about their Imams. Then this belief expanded to include the twelve Imams of the Shia, and the notion spread to all of the Imami Shia. The contemporary Shiite shaykh and 'Grand Ayatollah', Abdullah al-Mamqâni, affirms that believing that the Imams cannot make mistakes became one of the fundamentals of the Shiite madh-hab.[355] He does not deny that their earlier shaykhs regarded that as extreme, but he says: "What was regarded as extreme in the past has today become one of the fundamentals of the Shiite madh-hab."[356] If this belief in the infallibility of the Imams means taking them to the level of the Prophet, then believing that they cannot err is taking them to the level of divinity, as was indicated by the eighth Imam of the Shia, 'Ali ar-Riḍa. Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi and others stated that this belief was the line that separates the extremists from others,[357]

but their contemporary shaykh, al-Mamqâni, thinks that believing that the Imams cannot err is one of the fundamentals of the Shiite madh-hab, and that the one who rejects the fundamentals is a disbeliever. This view was also confirmed by their contemporary shaykh, Muḥsin al-Ameen.[358]

What this means then is that their later scholars regarded their earlier scholars as disbelievers, and vice versa. Al-Mamqâni believes that a fundamental belief of the Shiite madh-hab is that the Imams cannot make mistakes, and some of them even say that there is consensus on this point.[359] However, in some books that are addressed to the Sunnis,[360] we are told that the view of all the Shia is that the Imams can make mistakes.[361] Thus they denounce one another as disbelievers and contradict one another, each one claiming that what he says is the Shia view.[362] Belief in the infallibility of the Imams was one of the reasons for belief in changes in the divine will and taqiyyah — as we shall see below. This is because the real lives of the Imams were not at all in harmony with the claims of infallibility, so when differences or contradictions were found in their statements, the Shia explained them by saying that this was due to a change in the divine will or a case of taqiyyah, as some of the Shia have admitted.[363]

One of the most serious academic implications of the claims of infallibility is that they regard everything that was uttered by their twelve Imams as having a status similar to the words of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). Hence in their sources, most of the chains of narration for the reports end at one of their Imams instead of going back to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Shia claim for their Imams a level of infallibility that was not even achieved by the prophets and messengers of Allah, as clearly indicated in the Qur'an, Sunnah and consensus.[364]

3.2.1. Their evidence from the Noble Qur'an for the infallibility of their Imams

Even though the Book of Allah makes no mention at all of the twelve, as we have seen above, let alone their infallibility, the Twelver Shia quote the Qur'an to support their belief in the infallibility of their Imams. All their shaykhs agree on quoting as evidence the verse: ﴿And [remember] when the Lord of Ibrâheem [Abraham] [i.e., Allah] tried him with [certain] Commands, which he fulfilled. He [Allah] said [to him], 'Verily, I am going to make you an *Imam* [a leader] for mankind [to follow you].' [Ibrâheem (Abraham)] said, 'And of my offspring [to make leaders].' [Allah] said, 'My Covenant [prophethood] includes not *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers].﴾ *(Qur'an 2: 124)*

With this verse, al-Majlisi begins the chapter that he wrote in *al-Biḥâr* entitled: "The Necessity of the Imam's Infallibility."[365] Many contemporary Shiite shaykhs regard this verse as their main evidence from the Qur'an and do not quote any other verses to establish this point. Two of them are Muḥsin al-Ameen[366] and Muhammad Ḥusayn Âl Kâshif al-Ghaṭa', who says that this verse is 'clear evidence which proves the infallibility of the Imams'.[367]

The author of *Majma' al-Bayân* explained how his companions found evidence in this verse for what they wanted, as he said: "Our companions quoted this verse as evidence that the Imams must inevitably be infallible and protected from bad deeds, because Allah (ﷻ) stated that no evildoer can attain the Covenant, which is imamate.[368] Whoever is not infallible may be a wrongdoer who transgresses either against himself or others. If someone suggests that this verse confirms that no wrongdoer will attain the Covenant when he is in the state of being a wrongdoer, but that if he repents he will no longer be a wrongdoer, so it is possible for him to attain that Covenant, the answer is that even if he repents, the verse still

excluded him when he was a wrongdoer. If it excluded him when he was a wrongdoer, then it is decreed that he will never attain it. The verse is general in meaning and is not limited to any particular time, so it should be applied to all times. Thus no wrongdoer will attain that status, even if he repents later on."[369]

Refutation of their interpretation of the verse

(a) The early generations differed concerning the meaning of the word *al-'ahd* (translated here as 'the Covenant'). Ibn 'Abbâs and as-Suddi said: "It refers to prophethood. Allah (ﷻ) said, 'My Covenant (prophethood) includes not *Dhâlimoon* (polytheists and wrongdoers),' meaning prophethood." Mujâhid said: "It refers to leadership, meaning 'I will not appoint a wrongdoer as a leader whom others may follow.'" Qatâdah, Ibrâheem an-Nakha'i, 'Aṭa', al-Ḥasan and 'Ikrimah said: "The Covenant of Allah (ﷻ) in the hereafter will not include the wrongdoers, but in this world, wrongdoers may attain it and thus be granted security, food and sustenance." Az-Zajjâj said: "This is a good opinion, meaning 'My safety and security are not granted to the wrongdoers;' in other words, 'I will not grant them security from My punishment.' What is meant by wrongdoer is the polytheist." Ar-Rabee' ibn Anas and aḍ-Ḍaḥḥâk said: "The Covenant of Allah (ﷻ) that is given to His slaves is His religion, and He says the wrongdoers do not follow His religion. Do you not see that He says: ﴿We blessed him and Ishâq [Isaac]. And of their progeny are [some] that do right, and some that plainly wrong themselves?﴾ *(Qur'an 37: 113)* He says: Not all of your descendants, O Ibrâheem, will do right and follow the truth."

Ibn 'Abbâs also said, concerning the words: "My Covenant (prophethood) includes not *Dhâlimoon* (polytheists and wrongdoers)," that "the wrongdoers have no Covenant, and if you give them a covenant, then break it."[370] As we can see,

the early generations differed as to the interpretation of this verse, but according to the majority, it has nothing to do with the imamate or leadership at all. Those who did interpret it along the lines of imamate (leadership) interpreted it as referring to leadership in knowledge, righteousness and setting an example, not imamate according to the Râfiḍi concept.[371]

(b) Even if the verse was about imamate (rulership), there is nothing to indicate infallibility. It cannot be said that one who is not a wrongdoer is thus infallible — that he never makes a mistake, forgets anything, is absent-minded, or the like, as with the Shia concept of infallibility. According to their view, the one who forgets and the one who makes a mistake are both wrongdoers, but no one agrees with them on that, and it is not in accordance with the basic principles of Islam. It is quite clear that there is a big difference between denying the attribute of wrongdoing and affirming infallibility, because saying that someone is not a wrongdoer is an affirmation of his good character, not of infallibility in the Shiite sense.[372]

(c) Their argument that the one who does wrong and then repents from it is still described as a wrongdoer, and that repentance does not help to take away this description of being a wrongdoer, is not acceptable. The greatest of wrongdoing is polytheism, and Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿It is those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah and worship none but Him Alone] and confuse not their Belief with *Dhulm* [wrong, i.e. by worshipping others besides Allah]...﴾ *(Qur'an 6: 82)* He also explains what is meant by wrongdoing in the verse: ﴿Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily, joining others in worship with Allah is a great Dhulm [wrong] indeed﴾ *(Qur'an 31: 13)*. Yet despite this, Allah says concerning the disbelievers: ﴿Say to those who have disbelieved, if they cease [from disbelief], their past will be forgiven﴾ *(Qur'an 8: 38)*.

But the implication of what these Shia say is that the one who associates something else with Allah (ﷻ) even for a moment, or commits a sin, even if it is a minor sin, is a wrongdoer who will never be free of the attribute of wrongdoing. What this implies is that the polytheist, even if he becomes Muslim, will still be a polytheist, because wrongdoing is polytheism.[373] Thus they became even harsher than the Kharijites, because the Kharijites do not confirm the warning of punishment to the one who commits major sin unless he does not repent. It is well known on the basis of common sense, let alone Sharia, custom and linguistics that the one who disbelieves or does wrong and then repents and becomes righteous can no longer be called a disbeliever or wrongdoer. Otherwise it would be possible to call an old man a boy, one who is awake a sleeper, one who is rich poor, one who is full hungry, one who is dead alive, and vice versa. Moreover, if that is applied in other situations, it means that, for example, a person who swore that he would never greet a disbeliever then greets a believer, who had been a disbeliever many years ago, has broken his oath. However, no one says that.[374]

It is well known that a person who repents from wrongdoing may be better than one who never did anything wrong. Asserting that the person who never did an act of disbelief or killed or sinned is better than anyone who believed after disbelieving, or was guided after going astray, or repented after committing sin, is going against what is well-established in Islam. It is well known that the early generations were better than their children; is there anyone with any sense who would compare the children of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr with their fathers?[375] Moreover, this conclusion would imply that all the Muslims — including the Shia and Ahl al-Bayt, except those whom the Shia believe are infallible — are wrongdoers because they are not infallible.

Their shaykh aṭ-Ṭoosi said that the word *dhulm* (wrongdoing) implies something bad, so it cannot be applied to anyone except one who deserves to be cursed, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾No doubt! the Curse of Allah is on the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists, wrongdoers, oppressors].﴿ *(Qur'an 11: 18)*

(d) One of the Zaydi Shiite scholars stated, criticising the Twelver interpretation of this verse: The Râfiḍis quote the verse as evidence that the one who does wrong, even once, is not deserving of the position of imamate (rulership), and they wanted to undermine the caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. However, this is not correct because if the word *al-'ahd* (the Covenant) is interpreted as referring to prophethood, then there is no evidence for them in the verse, but if it is interpreted as referring to imamate (rulership), then the one who repents from wrongdoing can no longer be described as a wrongdoer, and thus Allah (ﷻ) will not exclude him from attaining the Covenant (*al-'ahd*) except if he is a wrongdoer.[376]

3.2.2. The verse of purification and the hadith of the cloak

The verse of purification is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 33)*. As is well known, this is part of the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance. And perform *As-Salât* (*Iqâmat-as-Salât*), and give *Zakât* and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification.﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 33)*

The Twelver Shiite scholars deliberately took the verse of purification out of its Qur'anic context in which Allah (ﷻ) was

addressing the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), because they wished to exclude the wives of the Prophet. Then they added to that the hadith of the cloak, which was narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* from the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﷺ).[377] She said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) went out one morning wearing a striped cloak of black camel hair. Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali came, and he enfolded him in the cloak, then al-Ḥusayn came and he enfolded him in it, then Fâṭimah came and he enfolded her in it, then 'Ali came and he enfolded him in it, then he said: ﴿Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification﴾ *(Qur'an 33: 33).*" They also added the hadith of the Mother of the Believers Umm Salamah (ﷺ) referring to when this verse was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ). Umm Salamah asked: "Am I included with them, O Prophet of Allah?" He said: "You are still as you are (one of Ahl al-Bayt), and you are good," in order to confirm the meaning that they wanted for this verse.[378] The Twelver Shiite scholars think that in this verse there is evidence for the infallibility of the people of the cloak, 'Ali, Fâṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and that they are protected from sins, both major and minor, and even from human error and forgetfulness.[379]

Their interpretation may be refuted in several ways:

3.2.2.a.

The hadith of Umm Salamah quoted above was narrated in a number of versions. It was narrated from Umm Salamah (ﷺ) that she said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) was in my house, along with 'Ali, Fâṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and I made some *khazeerah* (a dish made with ground meat and flour) for them. They ate and slept, and he covered them with an *'abayah* or blanket, then he said: 'O Allah, these are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) and purify them with a thorough purification.'" According to another report, the Prophet (ﷺ) made them sit on a cloak, then he took

hold of its four edges in his left hand and held it above their heads, and he gestured with his right hand to his Lord and said: "These are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) and purify them with a thorough purification." These two reports are in accordance with the report of Muslim from 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), that these five are included in the verse, but this does not necessarily mean that others are not included.[380]

There are other reports from Umm Salamah (ﷺ) that contain additional material indicating that she was not included with the people of the cloak. Most of these reports have some weaknesses, although some of them are sound, including the following report: "When this verse was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ): ﴾Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 33)* in the house of Umm Salamah (ﷺ), he called Fâṭimah and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and covered them with a cloak; 'Ali was behind him and he covered him with a cloak, then he said: 'O Allah, these are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) and purify them with a thorough purification.' Umm Salamah said: 'Am I included with them, O Prophet of Allah?' He said: 'You are still as you are (one of Ahl al-Bayt), and you are good.'"[381]

There is a very important report, with a reliable chain of narration, which indicates that Umm Salamah (ﷺ) was included under the cloak after the people of the cloak went out from under it.[382] Perhaps the reason for that is that it would not have been proper to include Umm Salamah with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) under one cloak, so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took her under it after they had come out. It was narrated that Shahr said: "I heard Umm Salamah, the wife of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), when news came of the death of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali. She cursed the people of Iraq and said: 'They have

killed him, may Allah kill them. They have deceived him and let him down, may Allah curse them. I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when Fâṭimah came to him one morning with a pot in which she had made some *'aṣeedah* (a gruel made of flour with butter and honey) for him, which she was carrying on a tray of hers, and she put it down in front of him. He said to her: "Where is your cousin (meaning 'Ali)?" She said: "He is in the house." He said: "Go and call him, and bring me his two sons." So she came with her two sons, holding each one by the hand, and 'Ali was walking behind her, until they entered upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He seated the two children in his lap, and 'Ali sat on his right, and Fâṭimah sat on his left.' Umm Salamah said: 'He picked up a cloak from Khaybar that had been spread out on the sleeping place in Madinah, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) covered them all with it, then he took hold of the two edges of the garment in his left hand, gestured with his right hand towards his Lord (ﷻ) and said twice: "O Allah, (these are) the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) and purify them with a thorough purification." I said: "O Messenger of Allah, am I not part of your family?" He said: "Of course, come under the cloak."' So she went under the cloak after he finished his supplication for his cousin 'Ali and (Ali's) two sons and his daughter Fâṭimah."[383]

So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) testified that Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) was part of his household, and he admitted her under the cloak after he had offered supplication for them.[384]

3.2.2.b.

Another indication that the verse does not refer to infallibility or imamate (caliphate) is that the entire verse is addressed to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ); it starts with them and ends with them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴾O Prophet [Muhammad]! Say to your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for

you and set you free in a handsome manner [divorce]. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for Al-Muḥsinât [good-doers] amongst you an enormous reward.' O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open illegal sexual intercourse, the torment for her will be doubled, and that is ever easy for Allah. And whosoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and does righteous good deeds, We shall give her her reward twice over, and We have prepared for her *Rizq Karim* [a noble provision — paradise]. O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women. If you keep your duty [to Allah], then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease [of hypocrisy, or evil desire for adultery] should be moved with desire, but speak in an honourable manner. And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, And perform *Aṣ-Ṣalât* [Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalât], and give Zakât and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification. And remember [O you the members of the Prophet's family, the Graces of your Lord], that which is recited in your houses of the Verses of Allah and *Al-Ḥikmah* [i.e. Prophet's Sunnah — legal ways, so give your thanks to Allah and glorify His Praises for this Qur'an and the Sunnah]. Verily, Allah is Ever Most Courteous, Well-Acquainted with all things.﴾ *(Qur'an 33: 28-34)*

It is addressed to all the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). The command, prohibition, promise and warning are for them, but as there is benefit which may include them and other members of the Prophet's household, the masculine pronoun [in the original Arabic] is used with regard to the issue of purification, because if there are both males and females, words appear in the masculine form. This is the case here, since the purification issue includes all the members of the household (Ahl al-Bayt). 'Ali, Fâṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn

(may Allah be pleased with them) are more entitled to that than others, so the Prophet (ﷺ) singled them out in his supplication for them. Moreover, a man's wife is part of his household, so it is common in Arabic for a man to say to his friend *"Kayfa ahluka* (how is your family)?" meaning, "How are your wife and womenfolk?" The answer will be, *"Hum bikhayr* [They (using the masculine plural) are fine]." Allah (ﷻ) says: "They said: ﴿Do you wonder at the Decree of Allah? The Mercy of Allah and His Blessings be on you, O the family [of Ibrâheem (Abraham)]﴾ *(Qur'an 11: 73).* The person addressed in this verse, according to scholarly consensus, is Sârah the wife of Ibrâheem (ﷺ). This indicates that a man's wife is one of his household.[385]

Allah (ﷻ) also says: ﴿Then, when Moosa [Moses] had fulfilled the term, and was travelling with his family, he saw a fire in the direction of Tûr [Mount]. He said to his family: 'Wait, I have seen a fire; perhaps I may bring to you from there some information, or a burning firebrand that you may warm yourselves'﴾ *(Qur'an 28: 29).* The person addressed here is the wife of Moosa (ﷺ).

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And mention in the Book [the Qur'an] Ismâ'eel [Ishmael]. Verily, he was true to what he promised, and he was a Messenger, [and] a Prophet. And he used to enjoin on his family and his people Aṣ-Ṣalâh [the prayers] and the Zakât, and his Lord was pleased with him﴾ *(Qur'an 19: 54-55).* Who are his family whom he used to enjoin to pray? This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, addressing the Prophet (ﷺ): ﴿And enjoin Aṣ-Ṣalâh [the prayer] on your family, and be patient in offering them [i.e. the Ṣalâh (prayers)].﴾ *(Qur'an 20: 132).* Undoubtedly the word family here includes his wives, or at least Khadeejah, as this soorah was revealed in Makkah.[386]

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿So they raced with one another to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back. They both found her lord [i.e. her

husband] at the door. She said: 'What is the recompense [punishment] for him who intended an evil design against your wife [*ahlika*], except that he be put in prison or a painful torment?﴾ *(Qur'an 12: 25)* This refers to the ruler of Egypt. In the phrase, "What is the recompense (punishment) for him who intended an evil design against your wife [*ahlika*]," the word translated as wife here is *ahl* (which is usually translated as 'family'). This is quite clear.[387]

3.2.2.c.

The idea of removing *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) does not, in either the Arabic language or the language of the Qur'an, imply infallibility at all. Ar-Râghib al-Isfahâni said in *Mufradât Alfâdh al-Qur'an*, under the heading *rajasa*: "The word *ar-rijs* refers to something dirty, so it may be said *rajul rajsi* (a dirty man) or *rijâl arjâs* (dirty men). Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾...are an abomination [*rijs*] of Satan's handiwork﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 90)*. From the point of view of Sharia, *rijs* refers to alcohol and gambling. The disbelievers are regarded as *rijs* because believing in polytheism is the most abhorrent of all things. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾But as for those in whose hearts is a disease [of doubt, disbelief and hypocrisy], it will add suspicion and doubt [*rijsan*] to their suspicion, disbelief and doubt [*ila rijsihim*]﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 125)*. Allah also says: ﴾And He will put the wrath [*al-rijs*] on those who are heedless.﴿ *(Qur'an 10: 100)*. It was said that *ar-rijs* means stench, or torment, as in the verses ﴾Verily, the Mushrikoon [polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, and in the Message of Muhammad] are *Najasun* [impure]﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 28)* and ﴾or the flesh of swine [pork]; for that surely, is impure [*rijs*]﴿ *(Qur'an 6: 145)*. To sum up, the basic meaning of the word *rijs* is dirt or filth, and it is used to refer to polytheism, as in the verse, ﴾So shun the abomination [*rijs*] [worshipping] of idols, and shun lying speech [false statements]﴿ *(Qur'an 22: 30)*. The word is also used to refer to ḥarâm and evil things, such as food and drink, as in the verses: ﴾Say

[O Muhammad]: 'I find not in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be *Maytah* [a dead animal] or blood poured forth [by slaughtering or the like], or the flesh of swine [pork]; for that surely, is impure or impious [unlawful] meat...'❖ *(Qur'an 6: 145)* and ❖Intoxicants [all kinds of alcoholic drinks], and gambling, and *Al-Ansâb* [stone altars for sacrifices to idols, etc.], and *Al-Azlâm* [arrows for seeking luck or decision] are an abomination [*rijs*] of *Shaytân*'s [Satan's] handiwork❖ *(Qur'an 5: 90)*. There is no proof that the Qur'an uses the word *rijs* to refer to sin in a general sense, such that removing *rijs* would imply infallibility."[388]

3.2.2.d.

Purification from *rijs* is not an affirmation of infallibility for anyone. Just as the word *rijs* does not refer to a man's sins or errors in ijtihâd (reasoning and deriving rulings) and instead refers to dirt, stench and impurities — both tangible and intangible, so too the word purification does not imply infallibility. Allah (ﷻ) wants to purify all the believers, not just the members of the Prophet's household, even though Ahl al-Bayt are the most entitled and most deserving of purification among people. Allah (ﷻ) says in His Book about the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): ❖Allah does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you, and to complete His Favour to you❖ *(Qur'an 5: 6)*.

Allah (ﷻ) also says: ❖Take *Sadaqah* [alms] from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it❖ *(Qur'an 9: 103)*.

❖Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.❖ *(Qur'an 2: 222)*

Just as Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He wants to purify the members of the Prophet's household (Ahl al-Bayt), He also tells us that He wants to purify the believers. If the fact that Allah (ﷻ) wants to

purify them meant infallibility, then that would have happened to the Companions and to all the believers, because of the verses stating that Allah (ﷻ) wanted to purify them. Allah (ﷻ) says of the Companions who frequented the mosque of Qubâ': ﴾In it are men who love to clean and to purify themselves. And Allah loves those who make themselves clean and pure﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 108)*. However, these people were not infallible or protected from sin, according to consensus.

Allah (ﷻ) also says of the people of Badr, of whom there were three hundred and thirteen men: ﴾And He caused water [rain] to descend on you from the sky, to clean you thereby and to remove from you the *Rijz* [whispering, evil suggestions] of *Shaytân* [Satan].﴿ *(Qur'an 8: 11)*. This is not an affirmation of their infallibility. Moreover, there is no difference in wording between this verse and the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says of Ahl al-Bayt: ﴾to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 33)*. The words *rijz* and *rijs* are very close in meaning, and the purification mentioned in both verses is the same. It is whims and desires that made the second verse, and not the first, evidence for infallibility.

What is strange is that the Shiite scholars adhere to the verse and apply it to the people of the cloak, then interpret Allah's wanting to purify them as confirming the infallibility of the people of the cloak, yet at the same time they deliberately forget the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) speaks of wanting to purify the Companions. On the contrary, they take the opposite view and criticise the Companions, accusing them of turning back on their heels, even though Allah (ﷻ) stated that He wanted to purify them, according to the verse: ﴾And he for whom Allah has not appointed light, for him there is no light.﴿ *(Qur'an 24: 40)*.[389]

3.2.2.e.

The divine will referred to in the verse is His legislative will, which is different from His universal decree. In other words, it means: Allah (ﷻ) loves to remove *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) from you. The Sunni scholars have discussed the two aspects of the divine will — the religious, legislative will and the universal, foreordaining will — and they said:

"The religious, legislative will includes that which Allah (ﷻ) loves and approves of, as in the verses where Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.﴾ *(Qur'an 2: 185)* and ﴿Allah wishes to accept your repentance, but those who follow their lusts, wish that you [believers] should deviate tremendously away [from the Right Path]. Allah wishes to lighten [the burden] for you; and man was created weak﴾ *(Qur'an 4: 27-28)*.

"The universal, foreordaining will is that which encompasses all of His creation, as in the verses where Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But Allah does what He likes﴾ *(Qur'an 2: 253)* and ﴿And my advice will not profit you, even if I wish to give you good counsel, if Allah's Will is to keep you astray﴾ *(Qur'an 11: 34)*.

"Sin comes under the heading of the universal, foreordaining will. Allah (ﷻ) does not love, approve of or enjoin sin; rather He despises it, hates it and forbids it. This is the view of all the early generations and the imams (leading scholars); they differentiated between the divine will, which encompasses that which He loves and is pleased with, and the universal, foreordaining divine will and decree, which does not necessarily include that which He loves and approves of."[390]

Undoubtedly Allah (ﷻ) removed *ar-rijs* from Fâṭimah, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, 'Ali and the wives of the Prophet (may Allah be

pleased with them all), but the divine will referred to in this verse is the legislative will. Hence it says in the hadith that when the Prophet (ﷺ) wrapped them in the cloak, he said: "O Allah, these are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs.*"[391]

3.2.2.f.

The supplication of the Prophet (ﷺ) settles the matter. If there was any indication in the verse of purification that purification of the people of the cloak had already taken place, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would not have covered them with the cloak and prayed for them by saying, "O Allah, these are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs.*"[392] This is clear evidence that the verse was revealed concerning the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted the people of the cloak to be included in this divine revelation of purification, so he gathered them and covered them with the cloak and prayed for them, and Allah (ﷻ) accepted his supplication for them[393] and purified them as He (ﷻ) purified the wives of the Prophet, as indicated by the text of the verse.

3.2.2.g.

Among the refutations proving that the verse does not indicate imamate and infallibility is the fact that what they claim as being unique to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them) on the basis of this verse would also apply to Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها). However, the position of leadership cannot be proven for women. If this is evidence that those who are included in the verse are infallible and deserve to be leaders, then Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها) would be like that too, in the same (true) sense. This indicates that the verse is not speaking about imamate or infallibility. Another point is the fact that nine of their Imams are not referred to in this verse, because it refers to three of the twelve only.[394]

3.2.3. Their evidence from their own reports

The Twelvers base their beliefs in infallibility and other matters on the reports narrated by the author of *al-Kâfi*, Ibrâheem al-Qummi, al-Majlisi and others of their kind. The reports that affirm this so-called infallibility for the twelve Imams are strange both in their texts and their chains of narration.

In his book about the infallibility of their Imams, al-Majlisi quoted twenty-three reports from his shaykhs such as al-Qummi, al-'Ayyâshi, al-Mufeed and others, after quoting this verse as evidence: ﴾And [remember] when the Lord of Ibrâheem [Abraham] [i.e., Allah] tried him with [certain] Commands, which he fulfilled. He [Allah] said [to him], 'Verily, I am going to make you an *Imam* [a leader] for mankind [to follow you].' [Ibrâheem (Abraham)] said, 'And of my offspring [to make leaders].' [Allah] said, 'My Covenant [prophethood] includes not *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers]'﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 124)*.

This shows that their interpretation of the verse to prove their point is false. In *al-Kâfi*, al-Kulayni wrote a number of chapters about this so-called infallibility, in which he quoted reports with chains of narration from the twelve Imams, claiming that they were infallible and even partners in prophethood; they even claimed to have some divine attributes. You will find some examples of that in *al-Kâfi*, in the chapter on their beliefs in the basic principles of faith. In the chapter entitled, "The Imams are the pillars of the earth," there are three reports which say that the twelve Imams are like the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in that they must be obeyed; they are like the Prophet (ﷺ) in virtue and with regard to the duties that they were given, and obedience was due to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as it was due to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).[395]

Soon after that, the author raises 'Ali to a status higher than that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), to the status of the Lord of the

Worlds, when he says that 'Ali said: "I have been given attributes that were not given to anyone before me. I have been given knowledge of death and calamities, so I did not miss knowledge of what came before me, and knowledge of what is in the future is not withheld from me."[396] In reality, the only One who has knowledge of death and calamities is Allah (ﷻ): ﴿No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die﴾ *(Qur'an 31: 34)*. Nothing escapes His knowledge, for He is the Creator (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Not even the weight of an atom [or a small ant] or less than that or greater escapes His Knowledge in the heavens or in the earth﴾ *(Qur'an 34: 3)*. The one who studies the chapter of *al-Kâfi* on this topic will note that it includes claims similar to those of false prophets and heretics throughout history; the only difference is that they attributed these fabrications to a number of the members of Ahl al-Bayt.[397]

3.2.4. Their rational evidence for infallibility

They say that it is essential for the Ummah to have an infallible leader to correct its mistakes because if it were possible for him to make mistakes, then he would need someone else to correct him, and thus there would be an endless chain... so there must be a leader who is infallible. This is because their reliance is on the leader (the Imam) and not on the Ummah. They say that he is the protector of Sharia, that there can be no reliance on the Qur'an, Sunnah or scholarly consensus without him, and so on.[398]

As a matter of fact, the exact opposite is true. The Ummah is protected from error (infallible) by means of the Book of its Lord and the Sunnah of its Prophet (ﷺ), for the Ummah cannot be united on misguidance. The infallibility of the Ummah means that there is no need for the ruler (the Imam) to be infallible himself. This was stated by the scholars with regard to the wisdom behind the infallibility of

the Ummah; they said: "When the nations before us changed their religion, Allah sent a Prophet to show them the truth. But there is no Prophet after the Prophet of this Ummah; therefore its infallibility takes the place of prophethood. If anyone tries to alter the religion, Allah will enable and inspire someone to explain the error of his ways. Hence Allah mentioned the way of the believers alongside obedience to His Prophet when He (ﷻ) said: ﴿And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger [Muhammad] after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in hell — what an evil destination!﴾ *(Qur'an 4: 115)*. So the infallibility of the Ummah and its protection against misguidance, as mentioned in the Islamic texts, is completely different from the idea that one of the Muslims must be infallible and that it is possible for the entire Muslim community to fall into error if there is no infallible leader among them."[399]

All the words that they wrote, filling many pages with their rational evidence to confirm the need for an infallible Imam, are fulfilled in the Messenger (ﷺ). Hence in the case of a dispute, the Ummah refers to what the Messenger brought, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah; they do not refer to the ruler (the Imam). ﴿[And] if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger﴾ *(Qur'an 4: 59)*. The scholars said that this means: "Refer to the Book of Allah and to His Prophet (ﷺ), and after he dies, refer to his Sunnah."[400] With the guidance provided by the Qur'an and Sunnah, the Ummah cannot unite on misguidance, because it will never be without those who adhere to both, until the Hour begins. Hence proof was established for the Ummah by means of the Messengers. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, We have sent the Revelation to you [O Muhammad] as We sent the Revelation to Nooh [Noah] and the Prophets after him; We

[also] sent the Revelation to Ibrâheem [Abraham], Ismâ'eel [Ishmael], Isḥâq [Isaac], Ya'qoob [Jacob], and Al-Asbât [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya'qoob (Jacob)], 'Eesa [Jesus], Ayyoob [Job], Yoonus [Jonah], Hâroon [Aaron], and Sulaymân [Solomon]; and to Dâwood [David] We gave the Zaboor [Psalms]. And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you, — and to Moosa [Moses] Allah spoke directly. Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after the [coming of] Messengers.) *(Qur'an 4: 163-165)*

Allah (ﷻ) did not add "and the Imams". This proves false the view of those who believe that people need someone other than the Messengers, such as the Imams.[401]

Their claim of infallibility has no proof except for their suggestion that Allah (ﷻ) will never leave the world devoid of infallible Imams, because of the interests and mercy to be found in that. But it is well known that no interest or mercy has been achieved by this supposed absent, awaited Imam; the same is true of his grandfathers who preceded him. No interest or mercy was achieved by any infallible Imam as was achieved after the Hijrah by the Prophet (ﷺ). He was the leader of the believers, whom they had to obey and through whom they achieved happiness. After he died, authority was not acquired by anyone whom they can claim was infallible except 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). It is also known that the interests and mercy enjoyed by the believers at the time of the three previous caliphs were greater and better than those during 'Ali's caliphate, which was a time of killing, turmoil and division.[402]

With regard to the other Imams, who are lower than 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) in status, people could acquire from their knowledge and examples what they could acquire from others like them. 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn and his son Abu Ja'far, and the two sons of Ja'far ibn Muhammad,

taught people that which Allah (ﷻ) taught them, in the same manner as other imams of their time. During their eras, there were other scholars who were more knowledgeable and more beneficial than them, and this is well known among the scholars. Even if they were more knowledgeable and more religiously committed, people of knowledge and religious commitment could not achieve what could be achieved by people in positions of power and authority, who were able to oblige the people to adhere to the truth and prevent them from indulging in falsehood. The Imams after these three, such as the two al-'Askaris, did not show great knowledge from which the Ummah could benefit, and they did not perform any actions from which the Ummah could benefit. They were just like other members of Banu Hâshim who had a certain sanctity and status, and they had enough knowledge about Islam to fulfil their religious duties, which is knowledge that many ordinary Muslims also had; that should be expected of people like them. Hence the scholars did not take from them as they had taken from the first three.[403]

3.2.5. General discussion of the idea of infallibility of the Imams

The claim of infallibility of the Imams is similar to giving them a share of prophethood. The infallible one must be followed in all that he says, and it is not permissible to go against him in any way. This is something that is only for the Prophets, hence we are enjoined to believe in what was revealed to them. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Say [O Muslims]: We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrâheem [Abraham], Ismâ'eel [Ishmael], Isḥâq [Isaac], Ya'qoob [Jacob], and to Al-Asbât [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya'qoob (Jacob)], and that which has been given to Moosa [Moses] and 'Eesa [Jesus], and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no

distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted [in Islam]﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 136).*

We are directed to say: "We believe in what was given to the Prophets." Belief in what the Prophets brought is one of the tenets that we are obliged to say and believe in; this is something on which there is consensus among the Muslims. The one who regards anyone after the Prophet as infallible in all that he says has given him the status of prophethood, even if he does not call him such.[404] This is contrary to the religion of Islam; it is contrary to the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the consensus of the early generations and leading scholars of the Ummah.

With regard to the Qur'an, Allah says: ﴾O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger [Muhammad], and those of you [Muslims] who are in authority. [And] if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 59).* He commands us, in the case of a dispute, to refer only to Allah (ﷻ) and the Messenger. If the people had any figure who was infallible, apart from the Messenger (ﷺ), Allah would have enjoined us to refer to him, so the Qur'an indicates that there is no infallible figure after the Messenger (ﷺ).[405]

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴾And whoso obey Allah and the Messenger [Muhammad], then they will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the Ṣiddeeqoon [those followers of the Prophets who were first and foremost to believe in them, like Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq], the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are!﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 69)*

﴾And whosoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, then verily, for him is the fire of hell, he shall dwell therein forever.﴿ *(Qur'an 72: 23)*

So the Qur'an, in more than one place, indicates that the one who obeys the Messenger is one of the blessed, and it is not stipulated that he obey any other infallible figure. In the same way, the one who disobeys the Messenger is one of the doomed, even if he obeys one whom he thinks is infallible. The scholars are unanimously agreed that the words of every person may be accepted or rejected except the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He must be believed in everything he says and followed in everything he commands. His prohibitions must be heeded, and Allah should only be worshipped in the ways he prescribes. He is the one who is infallible, and he does not speak of (his own) desire; it is only a revelation revealed.[406]

The Sunnah also indicates this, but the Shia only refer to the words of their Imams. Below are some words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), which prove that their understanding is flawed.

There are reports narrated in *Nahj al-Balâghah*, a book in which the Shia believe, which demolish all that they have built of claims that the Imams are infallible. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) says, according to what is narrated by the author of *Nahj al-Balâghah*: "Do not try to flatter me, do not think that I would be upset when you tell me the truth and do not think that I want to be above people, for if a person finds truth burdensome when it is told to him or finds justice burdensome when it is discussed with him, he will find acting upon them to be even more burdensome. So do not refrain from speaking the truth or advising me to be fair and just, for I myself am not above making mistakes and am not safe from error."[407] Here he does not claim what the Shia claim for him, that he does not make mistakes; on the contrary, he confirms that he is not safe from error. Similarly, he does not say that he has no need of people's advice; rather he seeks advice on the basis of truth and justice, because the Ummah cannot unite on misguidance, but each individual on his own is vulnerable to misguidance. Thus we know that the claim of infallibility comes from the extreme Shia.[408]

It also says in *Nahj al-Balâghah*: "The people have no choice but to have a leader, whether he is righteous or a wrongdoer, under whose leadership the believer will strive and under whose authority the fay' will be collected, the enemy will be fought, the roads will be kept safe and the weak will be supported against the strong."[409] We can see that infallibility is not stipulated for the ruler and is not referred to at all. He thought that it was essential to appoint a leader to serve the interests of the people and the country, but he did not say that no one should be in charge of the people's affairs except an infallible Imam, or that every banner that is raised other than the banner of the infallible one is a banner of ignorance, as the books of the Shia say. He did not limit rulership to the twelve who are regarded as infallible by the Shia, or regard as disbelievers those who take positions of leadership, such as the caliphs of the Muslims — as is the view of the Shia. He thought that it was essential for there to be a ruler, even if he is a wrongdoer, and he regarded his leadership as legitimate. He considered it permissible to engage in jihad under the leadership of a bad ruler. What does this have to do with what the Shia believe — that jihad is not permissible until the Awaited One[410] emerges, because legitimate rulership is limited to the twelve Imams?

The Imams admitted their sins and asked Allah for forgiveness for them. According to *Nahj al-Balâghah*, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said in his supplication: "O Allah, forgive me for what You know better than I, and if I repeat it, then forgive me again. O Allah, forgive me for what I have promised but which You did not find fulfilled with me. O Allah, forgive me for what I said for the purpose of drawing close to You but which was different from what was in my heart. O Allah, forgive me for brief glances, saying what I did not mean, desires of the heart and slips of the tongue."[411] We can see this admission of sin and of returning to it after repentance, this admission of saying what is not meant and desires of the heart. All of that is contrary to what the Shia claim of infallibility, because if 'Ali and the

Imams were infallible, then seeking repentance for their sins would be in vain. The books of the Shia narrate that each of their Imams sought forgiveness from Allah for sins and errors, but if they were infallible, they would not have any sin.[412] The Shiite shaykhs did not know how to interpret such supplications, which are contrary to their belief in infallibility.[413]

There is another matter from the books of the Shia themselves that shows the claim of infallibility to be false: differences and contradictions in their views on various issues. The actions of those who are infallible should not be contradictory; they should confirm and support one another. Differences of opinion are contrary to the concept of infallibility, and infallibility is a condition of imamate in their view; hence they contradict the principle of imamate itself. The fact that there are differences and contradictions in the actions of the Imams was a direct cause of many people leaving Shiism, because they were confused about this contradiction. For example, al-Qummi and an-Nawbakhti mentioned that after the killing of al-Ḥusayn, a number of his companions were confused and said: "We see a contradiction between the actions of al-Ḥasan and the actions of al-Ḥusayn (ﷺ). If what al-Ḥasan did — making peace with Mu'âwiyah and giving up his leadership to him because he was unable to fight him, despite the large number and strength of his supporters — was right, correct and essential, then what al-Ḥusayn did — fighting Yazeed ibn Mu'âwiyah, despite the small numbers and weakness of his supporters and the large number of Yazeed's supporters, until he and all his companions were killed — was an invalid action that was not essential. Al-Ḥusayn had a greater excuse to refrain from fighting Yazeed and to seek a peace deal than al-Ḥasan had to refrain from fighting Mu'âwiyah. If what al-Ḥusayn did by fighting Yazeed until he and his children and companions were killed, was right, correct and essential, then al-Ḥasan's giving up the

fight against Mu'âwiyah, despite the large numbers that he had with him, was wrong." They had doubts about the validity of the leadership of both, so they recanted and joined the common folk.[414]

As for examples of differences and contradictions in the opinions of the Imams, there are many of them, and this was another reason why some of the Shia gave up Shiism. One of the prominent Shiite scholars, aṭ-Ṭoosi, testified to that and said that the reports narrated from them contradicted and differed from one another to such an extent that you cannot find any report without finding another that conflicts with it. This is regarded as one of the greatest flaws of the Shiite madh-hab and as one of the reasons why some of the Imami Shia left the madh-hab. The books *at-Tahdheeb* and *al-Istibṣâr*, which are two of the four main reference books of the Shia, bear witness to this contradiction in many of their reports.

Aṭ-Ṭoosi tried to reconcile these differences and deal with these contradictions by interpreting some of the reports as being an example of taqiyyah, but he only succeeded in making matters worse, as aṭ-Ṭoosi is the one who was deciding which of these reports were and were not examples of taqiyyah and hence which reports were to be acted upon and which were not. What is agreed upon is that aṭ-Ṭoosi himself was not infallible and would inevitably make mistakes in his decision on some of these reports. He may have regarded some things that were not taqiyyah as being taqiyyah, and the Shia followed him in his verdicts. It is clear that in their religious affairs, the Shia are following people like aṭ-Ṭoosi, and they are not following one who is infallible.

The Râfiḍi Shia came up with their beliefs in taqiyyah and changes in the divine will, which we will discuss below, as a means of explaining these differences in the reports and actions of the Imams. Some of the Shia discovered these attempts and found out the reason for the fabrication of these two doctrines, so they left Shiism

and said: The Râfiḍi Imams invented two doctrines for their followers whereby they will never notice any of the lies of their Imams, namely the idea of changes in the divine will and the permissibility of taqiyyah.

There is another matter which shows the claim of infallibility to be false, which is that the infallible one whom they supposedly follow could not protect them from developing differences with regard to the foundation of their religion, namely the imamate. We find that they differ, forsake one another, curse one another and regard each other as disbelievers due to their differences with regard to the number and identities of their Imams and the question of whether to await the return of the Imam or to go ahead and choose another Imam. This is in addition to the various contradictory reports that discuss many religious issues, both basic and minor. The so-called infallibility did not prevent the Shia from differing among themselves, and the fact that the concept of infallibility did not benefit them indicates that it does not exist at all. It could be said that their belief in the infallibility of the Imams is irrelevant today anyway, since the line of the Imams effectively came to an end in 260 AH, and there is nothing left but to wait for the promised 'absent Imam'. However, this belief has an impact on the lives of the Shia today in several ways:

1. They follow the reports narrated from the twelve Imams in the same way that other Muslims follow the Qur'an and Sunnah.

2. They exaggerate about the graves and tombs of the Imams, and they exaggerate about their infallibility. This reached the extent of ascribing divine attributes to them and turned into such exaggeration about their graves and shrines that they circumambulate them and call upon their occupants instead of upon Allah (ﷻ).

3. The Shiite scholars are given some of these attributes (of infallibility), so they think that the one who rejects what the scholar says is like the one who rejects what Allah (ﷻ) says. This is a very serious matter that is like associating partners with Allah (ﷻ).
4. They believe in this corrupt belief that has nothing to do with Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and his sons and grandsons (may Allah be pleased with them).[415]

3.3. Appointment by name is one of the conditions of imamate according to the Twelver Imami Shia

The Râfiḍi Shia believe that imamate is like prophethood and can only be by divine instruction on the lips of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). They believe that imamate, like prophethood, is a mercy from Allah, and that no era should be without an Imam, to whom obedience is obligatory and who is appointed by Allah (ﷻ). The people do not have the right to choose and appoint the Imam, and the Imam does not have the right to appoint his successor. They fabricated and attributed to their Imams dozens of reports concerning this, including the reports attributed to Imam Muhammad al-Bâqir (may Allah have mercy on him), in which he is supposed to have said: "Do you think that this matter is up to us to decide as we wish? No, by Allah, it is a covenant from the Messenger of Allah, in which man after man is named until the last man."[416]

The Twelver Shia believe that the Messenger (ﷺ) spoke of and mentioned by name the Imams who were to come after him, and that there are twelve Imams, no more and no less. Their names are:

1. 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (d. 40 AH)
2. Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) az-Zakiy (d. 50 AH)

3. Al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali (ﷺ), the leader of the martyrs (d. 61 AH)
4. *'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-'Âbideen (d. 95 AH)*
5. Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Bâqir (d. 114 AH)
6. Ja'far ibn Muhammad aṣ-Ṣâdiq (d. 148 AH)
7. Moosa ibn Ja'far al-Kâdhim (d. 183 AH)
8. 'Ali ibn Moosa ar-Riḍa (d. 203 AH)
9. Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Jawâd (d. 220 AH)
10. 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hâdi (d. 254 AH)
11. Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Mahdi (d. 256 AH)
12. Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali al-'Askari (d. 260 AH)

According to Ibn Saba', the appointment of rightful heirs stopped at 'Ali (ﷺ), but those who came later included a number of his descendants in this concept. The Shiite cells were working quietly and secretly, but nevertheless these claims reached some members of Ahl al-Bayt, and they denied them categorically, as their forefather Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) had done. Hence those liars fabricated the concept of taqiyyah, which they falsely ascribed to Ahl al-Bayt, so that it would be easy for them to spread their ideas, making sure that their followers would not be affected by the sincere public statements of Ahl al-Bayt to the people.[417]

One of the most serious matters fabricated by the Shia is the idea of the rightfully appointed heir. This means that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) instructed the people that after his death, the caliphate should go directly to 'Ali (ﷺ), and it means that those who came before him usurped his rights. It says in the book *al-Kâfi* that those who died without knowing their Imam died a death like those during the time of pre-Islamic ignorance. 'Ali was the rightful heir of the Prophet (ﷺ), according to their claim.[418] However, in studying the history of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, we find no mention of rightfully appointed heirs during the caliphates of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ). This idea began to emerge during the last years of the

caliphate of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), when fitnah began to appear. The Companions rejected this idea when they heard it and explained that it was false; among the most famous of those who did so were 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) and the Mother of the Believers 'A'ishah (ﷺ). During the caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ), we see this idea crystallising in the form of a belief to which people were called and which was propagated. This notion of the so-called rightfully appointed heir, which is promoted by the Râfiḍis and confirmed by their scholars, was the fabrication of Abdullah ibn Saba', as was mentioned by an-Nawbakhti and al-Kashshi and as we have seen above. What is narrated in sound reports from a number of the Companions, including 'Ali (ﷺ) himself, is sufficient to refute their claim. There is a great deal of such evidence, including the following:

3.3.1.

It was said in the presence of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali by name as his successor, and she said: "Who said that? I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) as he was leaning on my chest. He called for a vessel of water, then he fell to one side and died, without me realising. So how could he have issued instructions that 'Ali should be his successor?"[419]

This clear statement from 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not appoint 'Ali by name as his successor is the greatest evidence that there was no appointed heir. The Prophet (ﷺ) died in her lap, so if there had been any instruction, she would have been the most aware of it of all people.[420]

3.3.2.

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) said: " 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) came out of the house of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) during the illness from which he died, and the people said: 'O Abu al-Ḥasan,

how is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) this morning?' He said: 'He is better this morning, praise be to Allah.' 'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib took his hand and said to him: 'By Allah, after three days you will be driven by the stick (you will be under the authority of someone else). By Allah, I think that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) will die of this sickness, for I know how the faces of Banu 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib look when they are dying. Let us go to the Messenger of Allah and ask him who is to be in charge. If we are to be in charge, then we will know it; if someone else is to be in charge, then we will know it, and he will advise him to be kind to us.' 'Ali said: 'By Allah, if we ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for it (leadership), and he denies it to us, the people will never give it to us after that and, by Allah, I will never ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for it.'"[421]

In these words, there is evidence of the extent of the Companions' commitment to carrying out the instructions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). If there had been any appointed successor, no one would have gone against it, and the Anṣâr would not have expressed their opinions so freely, bravely and honestly when they met, after the Prophet (ﷺ) died, to discuss a successor, saying: "A ruler from among us and a ruler from among you."[422] They would have sworn allegiance to the one whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had instructed should be his successor, or at least some of them would have mentioned these instructions. If there had been some instruction to that effect before this, 'Ali would have said to al-'Abbâs: "How can we ask him who will be his successor when he has already appointed me as his successor?" The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died the same day, and as there were no instructions of that nature, it becomes clear that the contention that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) had clear instructions is a claim that has no sound basis. All the reports that they narrate, referring to the instructions that Ali (رضي الله عنه) should be the successor, are to be rejected because they are contrary to this clear statement from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) himself. All the texts that they quote as

evidence either do not refer to the man concerned ('Ali) or they do refer to him, but they are fabricated.[423]

3.3.3.

'Ali (ﷺ) was asked: "Did the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) tell you anything that was for you only?" He said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not tell us anything that was for us only, that he did not tell all the people, except that which is in this sheath of my sword." He took out a document on which was written: "May Allah curse the one who offers a sacrifice to anything other than Allah, may Allah curse the one who steals the boundary markers, may Allah curse the one who curses his parents, and may Allah curse the one who gives refuge to an innovator."[424]

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This hadith, which is proven in Bukhari and Muslim and elsewhere from 'Ali (ﷺ), refutes the Râfiḍi claim that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave instructions that 'Ali should be his successor. If the matter was as they claim, none of the Companions would have rejected that (instruction of the Prophet). They were too obedient towards Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, during his lifetime and after his death, to reject his instructions and give precedence to someone other than the one to whom he gave precedence and to reject someone to whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had given precedence in his instructions. They are far above doing any such thing. The one who thinks that the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) could do that is accusing them all of corruption and of agreeing to go against the wishes of the Messenger (ﷺ) and against his ruling and instructions. Any person who goes so far in doing evil has gone beyond the pale of Islam and has become a disbeliever, according to the consensus of the prominent scholars."[425] An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This disproves the claim made by the Imami and Râfiḍi

Shia that there were instructions appointing 'Ali as caliph and other fabrications of theirs."[426]

3.3.4.

It was narrated that 'Amr ibn Sufyân said: "When 'Ali prevailed at the Battle of the Camel, he said: 'O people, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not appoint any successor. Therefore we decided to appoint Abu Bakr as his successor, and he followed the true path in his leadership until he passed away.'"[427]

3.3.5.

Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqi narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Shaqeeq ibn Salamah, that the latter said: "It was said to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه): 'Why don't you appoint a successor to rule us?' He said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not appoint a successor, so why should I appoint a successor? But if Allah wills good for the people, He will unite them after my death under the leadership of the best of them, as He united them after the death of their Prophet under the leadership of the best of them.'"[428]

This clearly indicates that the claim of instruction to appoint 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) is a fabrication of the Râfiḍis, whose hearts were filled with resentment and hatred of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), including 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and the members of his household. They only claimed to love them as a cover under which they plotted against Islam and its people.[429]

From these definitive texts, it is clear that there is no basis for this so-called appointment of a rightful heir, and that what the Râfiḍis rely on is the fabrication of Abdullah ibn Saba'. He was the first one to introduce the idea, after which chains of narration and texts (of reports) were fabricated and falsely attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ).

Their aim was to slander the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) for allegedly going against the command of the Messenger (ﷺ) and agreeing on that, so that they could undermine and reject what the Companions narrated of Qur'an and hadith to future generations of Muslims.[430]

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his refutation of al-Ḥilli: "As for the appointment of 'Ali by name, there is nothing of that nature in the reliable books of the hadith scholars; all the scholars of hadith are unanimously agreed that it is false. Abu Muhammad ibn Ḥazm said: 'We did not find any report with anyone about this so-called instruction, except one report which goes back to an unknown narrator who goes by the kunyah of Abu al-Hamra', but we do not know who he was at all.'"[431] Elsewhere he said: "Therefore we conclude that what the Râfiḍis claim about 'Ali being appointed as the Prophet's successor is something that none of the scholars, past or present, who have knowledge of the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), heard anything about. Hence the scholars of hadith know for certain that this report is false, as they know that other reports are false."[432]

However, among later extremists, there were those who revived Ibn Saba's theory concerning Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). They expanded it to include the descendants of 'Ali and al-Ḥusayn, using this as a cover to stir up people's emotions and reach their hearts, in order to achieve their aims against the Islamic state. The first one to start spreading the idea that leadership was limited to specific members of Ahl al-Bayt was Shayṭân aṭ-Ṭâq, whom the Shia call Mu'min aṭ-Ṭâq.[433] When Zayd ibn 'Ali found out about that, he sent for him to ask about this rumour. Zayd said to him: "I have heard that you are claiming that among the family of Muhammad, there is an Imam to whom obedience is obligatory." Shayṭân aṭ-Ṭâq said: "Yes, your father 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn was one of them." He said:

"How can that be, when he would take a mouthful of food, and if it was hot, he would cool it with his hand and then put it in my mouth? Do you think that he could protect me from the heat of this mouthful and not protect me from the fire of hell?" Shayṭân aṭ-Ṭâq said: "He did not want to tell you lest you reject it and thus become a disbeliever, then he would not be able to intercede for you."[434]

This story, which was narrated in the most reliable book of biography they have, shows that this theory was circulating in secret to the point that it was unknown to one of the imams of Ahl al-Bayt, namely Imam Zayd. Muḥibb ad-Deen al-Khaṭeeb stated that Shayṭân aṭ-Ṭâq was the first one to fabricate this misguided belief, limiting the position of the imamate and legislation to them and claiming infallibility for specific people among Ahl al-Bayt.[435] Shayṭân aṭ-Ṭâq was joined by another man, Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam (d. 179 AH).[436] It seems that the belief in limiting imamate to specific people started in Kufah,[437] with the efforts of a group of followers of Hishâm and Shayṭân aṭ-Ṭâq. Thus the foundations for the idea of limiting the imamate to a specific number were laid down in the second century by a group of people who claimed to have connections to Ahl al-Bayt, such as Shayṭân aṭ-Ṭâq and Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam.[438] Beliefs and ideas about the number of Imams differed among the various Shiite groups. It says in *Mukhtaṣar at-Tuḥfah*: "It should be noted that the Imamis limit the number of Imams, but they differed as to the exact number. Some of them said it is five, some said it is seven, some said it is eight, some said it is twelve and some said it is thirteen."[439]

The books of the Shia give an idea of these differences and contradictions, whether the books are those of the Ismailis, such as *Masâ'il al-Imamah* by an-Nâshi' al-Akbar or *az-Zeenah* by Abu Ḥâtim ar-Râzi, or of the Twelvers, such as *al-Maqâlât wal-Firaq* by al-Ash'ari al-Qummi and *Firaq ash-Shia* by an-Nawbakhti. The

issue of imamate is not a minor issue for them, in which differences might be regarded as normal. It is the basic foundation of their religion, and they say that the one who does not believe in their Imam has no religion. Hence they regard one another as disbelievers; even the followers of one Imam may regard each other as disbelievers and curse one another.[440] The Twelvers later settled on limiting the imamate to twelve Imams, but there was no one in the Prophet's family, Banu Hâshim, at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân or 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) who believed in the imamate of twelve Imams.[441] This belief was only known after the death of al-Ḥasan al-'Askari in 260 AH.[442]

Limiting the Imams to a specific number is a false and corrupt belief of which Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and his sons and grandsons are innocent. In the major Shiite reference book, *Nahj al-Balâghah*, it is narrated from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) that he said: "Leave me alone and find someone else, for we are facing new developments of different types, which are overwhelming and confusing. There are clouds on the horizon, and the path is not clear. You should understand that if I accept your offer, I will lead you to what I believe to be right, and I will not listen to the rebuke of anyone. But if you leave me alone, I will be like one of you, and probably I will be more obedient to whoever you appoint as your leader. I can serve you better as an adviser than as a ruler."[443]

If the imamate of 'Ali had been something decreed by Allah (ﷻ), it would not have been permissible for 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) under any circumstances to say to the people, "Leave me alone and find someone else," or to say, "I can serve you better as an adviser than as a ruler." How could he do that when the people wanted him to be a ruler and came to swear allegiance to him?[444]

He says something even clearer in *an-Nahj*: "The people have sworn allegiance to me who swore allegiance to Abu Bakr, 'Umar

and 'Uthmân, and on the same terms. The one who was present could not have a say in the matter, and the one who was absent has no right to object. Rather decision-making belongs to the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr; if they are unanimously agreed on a man and appoint him as leader, this must reflect the approval of Allah (ﷻ). If someone rebels against them by rejecting what they agreed to or by introducing innovation, they will have the right to try to bring him back to that which he rebelled against; if he persists, they will fight him for *following a way other than the believers'* way, and Allah (ﷻ) will keep him in the path he has chosen."[445]

With these words, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) highlighted some facts worth paying attention to:

(a) The ones among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who had the right to reach a decision on the basis of mutual consultation were the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr; they were the decision-makers.

(b) Their agreement on a person was a reason for Allah's approval and a sign that He was pleased with their choice.

(c) No one could become the leader or attain authority during their era without their choosing him or their consent.

(d) No one rejected their decision or rebelled against their ruling except an innovator and transgressor who was following a way other than that of the believers.

How do the Twelver Shia understand these important statements?[446]

The appointment of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) as Imam by name could not be proven by any means, and the issue *of limiting the number of* Imams to a specific number is to be rejected according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is neither rational nor realistic, because after this specific number, is the Ummah to remain without an Imam or ruler? The era of the visible Imams, according to the Twelvers, was little more than

two and a half centuries. The Shia were compelled to find a way out of the problem of limiting the number of Imams, so they introduced the idea of the scholar acting on behalf of the Imam, but they differed concerning the extent of this deputation.[447] In modern times, they were forced to abandon this principle completely, even though it is the foundation of their religion. They made the appointment of their head of state something that could be done by means of election; they abandoned the idea of limiting the number and instead limited the quality or type, restricting leadership of the state to 'the Shiite jurists'.[448]

What the Twelver Shia quote as evidence from the Sunni books for limiting the number of Imams

It was narrated that Jâbir ibn Samurah said: "There will be twelve rulers. Then he said something that I did not hear, and my father said that he said: 'All of them from Quraysh.'"[449] In Muslim, it is narrated that Jâbir said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'Islam will continue to prevail for the time of twelve caliphs,' then he said a word that I did not understand, and I said to my father: 'What did he say?' He said: 'All of them from Quraysh.'"[450] According to another version: "This religion will continue to prevail and be strong for the time of twelve caliphs."[451] According to yet another version: "The people's affairs will continue to be prosperous during the reign of twelve men."[452] Abu Dâwood narrated: "This religion will continue to prevail until you have had twelve caliphs, under all of whom the Ummah will be united."[453] Abu Dâwood narrated a similar report via al-Aswad ibn Sa'eed from Jâbir, and he said that he added: "When he returned to his house, Quraysh came to him and said: 'Then what will happen?' He said: 'Killing.'"[454]

The Twelvers cling to this text and quote it as evidence against Ahl as-Sunnah, not because they believe in what is mentioned in the

books of the Sunnis,[455] but they quote the hadiths they believe in. However, by examining the text with neutrality and objectivity, we find that these twelve men are described as becoming caliphs, and it is said that at their time, Islam will be strong and prevailing, the people will be united behind them, and they will still be in a good state. None of these attributes is applicable to those whom the Twelvers claim as their Imams. None of them became caliph except Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and al-Ḥasan for a short time. The Ummah was not prosperous or prevailing during the periods of any of these twelve Imams, even according to the Shia themselves. On the contrary, the Ummah "continued to deteriorate and was ruled by evildoers and even by disbelievers,"[456] and "the Imams themselves concealed their religious affairs by means of taqiyyah."[457] The era of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), when he was in a position of power and was a caliph, was 'an era of taqiyyah,' as was clearly stated by their shaykh al-Mufeed.[458] He "could not bring out the Qur'an or rule in accordance with many Islamic rulings," as was clearly stated by their shaykh al-Jazâ'iri.[459] He was "forced to go along with his companions and appease them at the expense of religion," as was stated by their shaykh al-Murtaḍa.[460]

Thus this hadith has nothing to do with their claims at all. Moreover, it does not limit the Imams to this number; it is a prediction from the Prophet (ﷺ) that Islam would continue to prevail during the era of these people. The eras of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Umayyads were periods of power and strength.[461] Ibn Taymiyah said: "Islam and the rule of Islam were stronger and more far-reaching at the time of the Umayyads than after their time." He quoted as evidence the hadith, "This matter will continue to prevail for the time of twelve caliphs, all of whom are from Quraysh." Then he said: "This is how it was. The caliphs were Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and 'Ali, then those who took over under whom the people united and who had power and strength, namely Mu'âwiyah and his

son Yazeed, then 'Abdul-Malik and his four sons, among whom was 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez. After that came the decline which has continued until today." Then he explained that.[462]

Concerning the hadith, 'all of them from Quraysh,'[463] he said: "This means that they are not limited to 'Ali and his descendants. If they were limited to 'Ali (ﷺ) and his descendants, he would have mentioned something to refer to that exclusivity. Don't you see that he did not say: all of them from among the descendants of Ismâ'eel or from among the Arabs. If they were distinguished by the fact that they were all from Banu Hâshim or from among the descendants of 'Ali, then the hadith would have referred to that. But as he said that they would all be from among Quraysh in general, it is known that they are from Quraysh, but they are not from a particular clan or tribe; rather they are from Banu Taym, Banu 'Adiyy, Banu 'Abd Shams and Banu Hâshim. The Rightly Guided Caliphs were from these tribes."[464] So there is nothing left of the description to match the description that they want except the number only, and the number does not mean anything.[465]

Their evidence from the Qur'an

The Shia did not find anything that would support their belief in imamate on the basis of Qur'anic texts, so they quoted verses from the Book of Allah that praised His righteous slaves and pious close friends, and they interpreted them as if they referred exclusively to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) on the basis of this corrupt belief, just as they fabricated many hadiths to support this reprehensible innovation. They did this in order to ensnare ignorant Muslims and those who had little knowledge about this subject. The arguments they presented concerning this are clearly false, and their argument is not free of two issues:

(a) Either what they quoted as evidence for that claim is sound, such as the verse of purification, the verse of

mubâhalah, the hadith of the banner, the hadith of Khumm and other hadiths,

(b) or the hadiths were fabricated, and fabricated reports cannot be used as evidence.

Hence it is well established among the scholars that the Râfiḍis are the most mendacious of the groups that claim to belong to Islam. Ibn Taymiyah stated that there was consensus among the scholars of hadith who know about narrations and chains of narration that the Râfiḍis are the most untruthful of all groups, and this attribute is ancient in them. Hence the leading scholars of Islam know that this group is distinguished by its lying.[466] The following are some examples of how they quoted Qur'an as evidence:

1. The verse of the imamate (Qur'an 5: 55)

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Verily, your *Walî* [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, — those who perform *As-Salâh* [*Iqâmah-as-Salâh*], and give *Zakâh*, and they are *Râki'oon* [those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer].﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 55)*

Their commentary on this verse is indicative of their claim that it is speaking about the imamate of 'Ali. Shaykh aṭ-Ṭâ'ifah, whom they call aṭ-Ṭoosi, said: "As for evidence of his imamate in the Qur'an, the strongest evidence for it is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says...", then he goes on to quote the verse mentioned above.[467] Aṭ-Ṭubrusi said: "This verse is one of the clearest indications of the validity of the imamate of 'Ali after the Prophet, with no dispute."[468] Their shaykhs are virtually agreed that this is the strongest evidence they have, and they present it as the main proof when quoting the evidence in their books.[469] As to how they derive any evidence from this verse to support their claim, they say: "The regular and prominent interpreters of Qur'an and scholars of Hadith are agreed that it was revealed concerning 'Ali (ﷺ), when he gave his ring in

charity to the poor man when he was praying, in the presence of the Companions, and it is mentioned in the six sound books."[470]

The word *innama* (translated here as 'verily') is indicative of exclusivity (as in 'no one but...'), according to the consensus of the linguists. The word 'wali' means the most fitting to be in charge; in other words, the most fitting to be the Imam or caliph.[471] We can see that when they quote this verse as evidence, they rely on what was narrated about the reason for its revelation, because there is nothing in the text of the verse to support what they are trying to prove. Thus their argument ends up being based on the report about the reason for revelation and not on the Qur'an itself. But is the report proven, and is that argument sound? This question may be answered by noting the following points:

1.a.

Their claim that the Sunnis are unanimously agreed that this verse was revealed concerning 'Ali (ﷺ) is one of the greatest false claims. On the contrary, the scholars of hadith agreed that it was not revealed specifically about 'Ali (ﷺ) and that he did not give his ring in charity while praying; they agreed that this story is false and fabricated.[472] The assertion that it is mentioned in the six sound books[473] is also a lie, because this report does not appear in any of the six books. Ibn Katheer quoted the reports saying that this verse was revealed concerning 'Ali (ﷺ) when he gave his ring in charity, and he commented on them by noting: "None of them is sound at all because of the weakness of their chains of narration and the fact that the men (in these chains of narration) are unknown."[474] 'Abdul-'Azeez ad-Dahlawi said: "As for the idea that it was revealed concerning 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), and the reports about the beggar and 'Ali giving his ring to him in charity while he was bowing in prayer, this was narrated by ath-Tha'labi[475] only. He is the only one who narrated it, and the Sunni scholars of hadith do not pay any attention to ath-Tha'labi at all. They called him 'one who cuts wood

at night and cannot tell fresh wood from dry wood'; in other words, they said that he does not know what he is doing. Most of these reports come from al-Kalbi from Abu Ṣâliḥ, and these are the weakest of reports on Qur'anic interpretation according to them."[476]

According to sound reports, the reason for the revelation of this verse was that Banu Qaynuqa' betrayed the Messenger (ﷺ) and went to 'Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit — as Ibn Jareer mentioned in his *Tafseer* — wanting 'Ubâdah to join them. He rejected them, regarding them as enemies, and he declared his love and support for Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger. Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed these words: ﴾Verily, your *Walî* [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers — those who perform *As-Salâh* [*Iqâmah-as-Salâh*], and give *Zakâh*, and they are *Râki'oon* [those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer]﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 55)*. This means that when they pray and give zakâh, they do so with humility and submission to Allah (ﷻ) in all their affairs.

At the beginning of this passage, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as *Awliyâ'* [friends, protectors, helpers], they are but *Awliyâ'* of each other. And if any amongst you takes them [as *Awliyâ'*], then surely, he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust]﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 51)*. This refers to Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool; he allied himself with Banu Qaynuqa' and when a dispute arose between them and the Prophet (ﷺ), he showed loyalty to them and stood with them, and he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) to intercede for them. 'Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit, on the other hand, disavowed them and rejected them. Allah (ﷻ) followed that with a description of the attributes of the believers, which applied to 'Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit and those who were with him: ﴾Verily, your *Walî* [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger,

and the believers﴾ *(Qur'an 5: 55)*. So this verse was revealed concerning 'Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit.[477]

These verses enjoin helping and supporting the believers and forbid taking disbelievers as friends. This meaning is also clearly supported — after one learns the real reason for its revelation — by the context of the verse. Before this verse, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as *Awliyâ'* [friends, protectors, helpers], they are but *Awliyâ'* of each other. And if any amongst you takes them [as *Awliyâ'*], then surely, he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust]﴾ *(Qur'an 5: 51)*. This is a clear prohibition on taking the Jews and Christians as close friends or loving and supporting them. '*Wilâyah*' in this context, according to scholarly consensus, does not refer to leadership; there is no reference to leadership in these verses at all. This is followed by mention of those to whom loyalty must be shown, namely Allah (ﷻ), His Messenger and the believers. It is clear that the loyalty, love and support that Allah (ﷻ) forbids in the first part of the verse are exactly the same as that which He enjoins on the believers in this verse; the one is the opposite of the other, as is clear in the Arabic.[478] Ar-Râzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Whereas in the previous verse, Allah forbade loyalty to the disbelievers, in this verse He enjoined loyalty to those to whom loyalty is due."[479] Ibn Taymiyah said: "It is well established and well known among the scholars of Qur'anic commentary, of the earlier and later generations, that this verse was revealed to prohibit loyalty and love towards the disbelievers and to enjoin loyalty and love towards the believers."[480]

1.b.

Allah (ﷻ) does not praise anyone except for that which is praiseworthy before Him, whether it is obligatory or recommended. According to scholarly consensus, giving in charity while praying is

not recommended. If it were, the Messenger (ﷺ) would have done it and encouraged others to do it, and he would have done it repeatedly. During prayer, a person is preoccupied, and giving to a beggar is something that can be done later, so the one who wants to give charity can give it after saying the salâm (at the end of the prayer). In fact, being distracted by giving to people who are begging invalidates the prayer, in the view of a number of scholars.[481]

1.c.

Even if we assume that this is allowed during prayer, what reason is there for specifying the position of bowing? How can it be said that there is no wali (friend, helper or protector) except those who give charity while they are bowing? If it is said that this was for the purpose of identifying 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), the response is that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) had many other obvious qualities by which he could be identified, so why would he not be identified by his known qualities and instead be identified by this, by which no one would recognise him except those who heard this story and believed in it? The majority of the Ummah has never heard of this report, which is not in any of the reliable books of the Muslims.[482]

1.d.

Their idea that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) gave his ring in zakâh when he was bowing, then this verse was revealed, is contrary to reality. He was poor, and the zakâh on silver is only required one year after taking possession of it, so 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was not one of those from whom zakâh was due at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).[483]

1.e.

The basic principle with regard to zakâh is that it must be given at the initiative of the one who is paying it; he should not wait until someone comes to him seeking it. Which is better: hastening to pay zakâh or sitting in your house with your zakâh beside you, waiting

for someone to knock at your door before you give the zakâh due on your wealth? Undoubtedly the former is better.[484]

1.f.

Their saying that leadership is meant by the word 'wali' in this verse is not in accordance with the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾Verily, your Walî [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 55)*. Allah (ﷻ) cannot be described as being the ruler and leader of His slaves. He is their Creator, Provider, Lord and Sovereign, and His is the creation and commandment,[485] but it cannot be said that Allah (ﷻ) is the leader (amir) of the believers as it is said that a ruler such as 'Ali is Amir al-Mu'mineen.[486] With regard to its meaning friendship as opposed to enmity, Allah takes care of His believing slaves. He loves them, and they love Him; He is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. Whoever takes a friend of His as an enemy, Allah (ﷻ) declares war on him.[487] This type of friendship is what is meant in the verse.

Moreover, the phrase ﴾and they are *Râki'oon* [those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer]﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 55)* means that they are submitting to their Lord and following His commands. The word *rukoo'* (which may mean bowing) originally means submission, so it means that they establish prayer and pay zakâh in a state of submission, which is humility and humbleness before Allah.[488] Allah (ﷻ) said, concerning Dâwood (ﷺ): ﴾And Dâwood [David] guessed that We have tried him and he sought forgiveness of his Lord, and he fell down prostrate [*kharra râki'an*] and turned [to Allah] in repentance﴿ *(Qur'an 38: 24)*. He fell down in prostration, but it is described as *râki'an* [*lit.* bowing] here because it was an expression of his state of humility and submission to Allah (ﷻ). Allah also says: ﴾And when it is said to them: 'Bow down [*irka'u*]!' They bow not down﴿ *(Qur'an 77: 48)*. Here, 'bow down' means humble yourselves and submit to the command of Allah.[489]

1.g.

They quote as evidence the word *innama*; as we noted above, it is translated here as 'verily', but it indicates exclusivity. They argue that it refers to 'Ali (ﷺ) in particular and thus declares invalid the rulership of the previous caliphs, but if this were the case, it would also declare invalid the rulership of the later Imams. According to this logic, the imamate of the two sons of 'Ali and the Imams who came after them is also rendered invalid. If their response to this dilemma is to say that what is meant by limiting imamate or rulership is limiting it to a particular time, as in the time when he was a ruler and not the time of the Imams after him, then this means that they are agreeing with the Sunnis that general rulership was for him only during the time when he was the Imam or ruler, and not before that.[490]

If — as their shaykhs say — this is the strongest evidence they have, then it is clear that they do not have a leg to stand on. The basic principle with regard to such an important and fundamental issue — which for the Râfiḍis is the most important matter of religion, and the one who denies it is regarded as a disbeliever — is that it should be based on texts with very clear wording that can be grasped by people of all levels. It should be understood by the common folk as it is understood by the scholars, understood by later generations as it was understood by those who heard it directly, and understood by desert people as it is understood by city dwellers. Since there is no such clear text in the Book of Allah, this proves that there is no statement appointing 'Ali (ﷺ) by name to be the Prophet's successor as they claimed.[491] This is the strongest verse they quoted as evidence from the Book of Allah, and they call it the verse of the imamate. They also cling to other verses which were quoted by Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli, to which Ibn Taymiyah gave a comprehensive answer.[492]

2. The verse of mubâhalah (Qur'an 3: 61)

The verse of mubâhalah, which was revealed concerning the Christian delegation of Najrân, is regarded by the Twelver Shia as another proof for their claims of imamate. In this verse, Allah says:

﴾Then whoever disputes with you concerning him ['Eesa (Jesus)] after [all this] knowledge that has come to you [i.e. 'Eesa (Jesus) being a slave of Allah, and having no share in Divinity], say [O Muhammad]: 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves — then we pray and invoke [sincerely] the Curse of Allah upon those who lie.'﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 61)*

The way they interpret this verse to prove the imamate of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, according to aṭ-Ṭoosi and other Shiite scholars, is by saying that the verse refers to the superiority of 'Ali in two ways:

(i) The aim of the mubâhalah is to distinguish who is following truth from who is following falsehood, and no one should issue such a challenge except one who is sincere, whose belief is definitely sound and who is the best of people before Allah (ﷻ).

(ii) The Prophet (ﷺ) made 'Ali the same as himself, based on the words 'ourselves and yourselves', because what is meant by the words 'our sons' is al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, what is meant by 'our women' is Fâṭimah, and what is meant by 'ourselves' is himself and 'Ali (ﷺ). Because he made him like himself, then no one else should come anywhere near his superiority and virtue.[493]

The verse of mubâhalah is so called because everyone who follows the truth would wish that Allah (ﷻ) would destroy the follower of falsehood who is debating with him, especially if there is proof (in this challenge) that he is following the truth and manifesting it. The challenge was that the wrongdoers were to die, and life was

very dear to them because of what they knew of their bad fate after death. There is no support in the verse of mubâhalah for what the Twelver Shia claim about imamate, for a number of reasons:

2.a.

Despite the many meanings and synonyms of the Arabic word for 'self', which the Imamis quoted as evidence that the text refers to the caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), there is no meaning of this word, either literal or metaphorical, that indicates the meaning of caliphate. What the Sunnis understand from this verse is that it refers to the Prophet (ﷺ) praying, alone or in the presence of his brothers in Islam or through blood and ties, and this is something that is in accordance with Arabic usage and with religious terminology. Az-Zubaydi said: "Ibn Khâlawayh said: 'The [Arabic for the] word 'self' may mean brother.'" Ibn Barriy said: "The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah says: ﴿But when you enter the houses, greet one another [*lit.* greet yourselves]﴾ *(Qur'an 24: 61).*" Ibn 'Arafah interpreted the words ﴿Why then, did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it [the slander], think good of their own people [*lit.* think good of themselves] and say: 'This [charge] is an obvious lie?'﴾ *(Qur'an 24: 12)* as referring to people of faith or people of their own religion.[494] Ad-Dahlawi said, concerning the verse of mubâhalah: "What is meant by 'let us call' is 'let us bring ourselves'. Moreover, even if we agree that the ruler, Imam 'Ali, was appointed by the Prophet (ﷺ) on the basis of the word 'ourselves', then who is referred to as ruler of the disbelievers in the word 'yourselves', even though they are all included in the word for 'let us call'? There is no point in the Prophet (ﷺ) calling himself and his children after the word 'come'."[495]

The words 'ourselves' and 'yourselves' are like the usage in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿Why then, did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it [the slander], think good of their

own people [*lit.* think good of themselves] and say: 'This [charge] is an obvious lie?'》 *(Qur'an 24: 12)*, which was revealed about the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) and the slander incident. One person could be meant by the Arabic word for 'selves' here. Similarly, in the verse 《So turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves [the innocent kill the wrongdoers among you]》 *(Qur'an 2: 54)*, what is meant is some killing others. In the verse: 《And [remember] when We took your covenant [saying]: Shed not the blood of your [people], nor turn out your own people [*lit.* do not turn out yourselves] from their dwellings,》 *(Qur'an 2: 84)* what is meant is 'do not expel one another'. So the Arabic word that is translated as 'selves' may refer to brothers, either by blood or by faith.[496]

Allah (ﷻ) says concerning His Messenger (ﷺ): 《Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger [Muhammad] from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He [Muhammad] is anxious over you; for the believers [he is] full of pity, kind, and merciful》 *(Qur'an 9: 128)*. This verse contains clear proof against the argument that the word 'selves' (in the verse of mubâhalah) refers to individuals that are identical, because here it is speaking of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the disbelievers of Makkah, yet it says 'from amongst yourselves'. Who could say that the 'self' of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is the same as the 'selves' of the disbelievers of Makkah? Allah forbid!

This discussion illustrates how they follow whims and desires in explaining the verse of mubâhalah. The Shiite scholars ignore all of these texts, then they come to this verse and exaggerate its meaning to the extent that they say that 'Ali (ﷺ) is the same as Muhammad (ﷺ) except in prophethood. Some Shiite reports even indicate that using the word for 'ourselves' to refer to a brother or relative or people of the same group is something that was known among the Arabs. It was narrated that Abu Abdullah (ﷺ) said:

"Amir al-Mu'mineen ['Ali] (ﷺ) sent Abdullah ibn al-'Abbâs to Ibn al-Kawa' and his companions, and he was wearing a thin chemise and a suit. When they looked at him, they said: 'O Ibn 'Abbâs, you are the best among ourselves, yet you are wearing such [fine] clothes.' He said: 'I am the first to dispute with you concerning that. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Say [O Muhammad]: 'Who has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allah, which He has produced for His slaves, and *At-Tayyibât* [all kinds of *Halâl* (lawful) things] of food?'﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 32)* and ﴾O Children of Adam! Take your adornment [by wearing your clean clothes] while praying [and going round (the *Tawâf* of) the Ka'bah]﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 31)*.'"

After all this Qur'anic evidence and this Shiite report, is there any room for the extremists to speak?[497]

2.b.

One of the prominent Shiite scholars, ash-Shareef ar-Raḍiy, admitted that the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) mentions 'ourselves' does not mean that 'Ali (ﷺ) is the same as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), as the Shia say. He said: "The Arabs, in their language, may refer to a cousin who is close or a relative as being 'the self' of his cousin, or a close friend as being 'the self' of his close friend. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Nor defame one another [*lit.* yourselves], nor insult one another by nicknames﴿ *(Qur'an 49: 11)*. What Allah (ﷻ) means is: 'Do not criticise your believing brothers,' so He refers to the brotherhood of faith as being like the brotherhood of blood. If the word for 'self' may be applied to a distant relative, it is more appropriate to be applied to a close relative. The poet said: 'On the day of Qura, we were killing ourselves,' meaning that it was as if we were killing ourselves by killing our brothers, and he regarded the 'self' of his kinsmen as being the same as his own 'self'. With regard to the verse in Soorat an-Noor in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴾But when you enter the houses,

greet one another [*lit.* greet yourselves]》 *(Qur'an 24: 61)*, it may be interpreted in a similar manner, because in the commentary it says that it means to greet one another. It is not possible for a person to greet himself, and it is inappropriate to interpret it in this way. The 'selves' of the believers are like one 'self' since they are following one religion, and this is a religious instruction. So if one of them greets his brother, it is like greeting himself, because the differences are lifted and the 'selves' have become one."[498]

Thus it becomes clear that the Shia have no argument to support their claim that this verse indicates that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) are equal and the same. The Arabic word that is translated as 'self' may apply to one who is a distant relative, so applying it to one who is a close relative is more appropriate than that, but this does not refer to imamate in any way whatsoever.[499]

2.c.

The aim of mubâhalah is for the one who is calling for it to prove his sincerity and truthfulness by assembling himself and his family — whom he naturally loves more than he loves others who are more distant from him — and calling for destruction if he is not sincere.[500] The fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) called the most closely-related of people to him is clear evidence that he was a true Prophet. When the Christians of Najrân saw that, they feared for themselves and gave up the idea of mubâhalah. As for the Râfiḍi innovators, they did not understand the meaning of these verses of the noble Qur'an because they rejected the truth and did not want to submit to it.[501]

2.d.

The contention of the Imami Shia, that the verse is indicative of equality between 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and the Prophet (ﷺ) except in prophethood, is something that is not to be accepted at all. No one, whether it is 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) or anyone else, is equal to the Prophet in matters of religion. What comparison can there be between the

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and the level of human perfection he reached, and any other person?

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) himself would not accept what the Imami Shia say about him, and any wise and fair-minded person would understand this issue clearly.[502] The position of prophethood is one that was held in great esteem by Amir al-Mu'mineen, and we have discussed that in this book.

2.e.

Major issues of belief and basic fundamentals of religion must be proven by clear Qur'anic verses with definitive meanings. For example, the verse, ﴾None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 255)* is about tawḥeed; ﴾Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah﴿ *(Qur'an 48: 29)* is about the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ); and ﴾And perform *As-Salât* [*Iqâmat-as-Salât*]﴿ *(Qur'an 24: 56)*, is about the obligatory nature of prayer.[503]

3. "Say (O Muhammad): 'No reward do I ask
of you for this except to be kind to me
for my kinship with you.'" (Qur'an 42: 23)

In their commentary on this verse, the Imami Shia narrate a hadith, which they attribute to the Prophet (ﷺ), in which he defined kinship (in this verse) as referring to 'Ali, Fâṭimah and their sons. The Imami Shia say that this supports the belief in their superiority and the duty to love them, and hence the duty to obey them and take them as Imams or leaders to the exclusion of others.[504]

The response to the above is as follows:

3.a.

This verse appears in Soorat ash-Shoora, which was revealed in Makkah before the migration to Madinah, according to the consensus of Ahl as-Sunnah.[505] It is well known that 'Ali did not

marry Fâṭimah until after the battle of Badr, which was in 2 AH; al-Ḥasan was born in 3 AH and al-Ḥusayn in 4 AH. This verse was revealed many years before the existence of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, so how could the Prophet (ﷺ) interpret it as referring to the obligation to honour relatives who were not yet known or born? [506]

3.b.

The commentary on this verse that appears in *aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥ* is contrary to that. Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه), that he was asked about the verse ﴿except to be kind to me for my kinship with you﴾ *(Qur'an 42: 23)*. Sa'eed ibn Jubayr said: "It refers to the relatives of Muhammad (ﷺ)." Ibn 'Abbâs said: "You are being too hasty. There was no clan of Quraysh to whom the Prophet (ﷺ) was not related through blood ties, so he said: 'All I ask of you is to uphold the ties of kinship between you and me.'"[507] Ibn Taymiyah said: "Here is Ibn 'Abbâs, the interpreter of the Qur'an and the most knowledgeable of Ahl al-Bayt after 'Ali, saying: 'This does not mean being kind to my relatives. Rather it means: I do not ask you, O Arabs and O Quraysh, for any reward; instead, I ask you to uphold the ties of kinship between me and you.' So he asked the people to whom he was sent first of all to uphold these ties of kinship with him and not to transgress against him, so that he could convey the message of his Lord."[508]

3.c.

The hadith that they regard as explaining the verse is false and fabricated, according to the consensus of the scholars of hadith who decide such issues; this was stated by Ibn Taymiyah.[509] Ibn Katheer also compiled all the hadiths that were narrated concerning the interpretation of this verse and determined that the hadiths stating that the kinship mentioned here refers to Fâṭimah and her sons have weak chains of narration. He narrated a report from Ibn Abi Ḥâtim that says: "A man whom he named told us, Ḥusayn al-Ashqar told us,

from Qays, from al-A'mash, from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, from Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ), who said: 'When the verse ﴾Say [O Muhammad]: 'No reward do I ask of you for this except to be kind to me for my kinship with you'﴿ *(Qur'an 42: 23)* was revealed, they said: "O Messenger of Allah, who are these whom Allah has enjoined us to be kind to?" He said: "Fâṭimah and her two sons, may Allah be pleased with them."''" But the chain of narration of this report includes someone who is dubious and is not known; he narrated from a fanatic Shiite shaykh, namely Ḥusayn al-Ashqar, whose reports cannot be accepted in this context. Stating that this verse was revealed in Madinah is far-fetched, because it is Makkan, and at that time Fâṭimah (ﷺ) did not have any children at all, since she did not get married to 'Ali (ﷺ) until after the battle of Badr in 2 AH. The correct interpretation of this verse is the one given by the scholar of the Ummah and the interpreter of the Qur'an, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ). Ibn Ḥajar also discussed the weakness of the reports mentioned and the fact that they are contrary to the sound hadiths.[510]

Their evidence from the Sunnah

1. The speech at Ghadeer Khumm

Ghadeer Khumm is located between Makkah and Madinah at al-Juḥfah,[511] twenty-six miles to the east of Râbigh. Now it is called al-Ghurbah.[512] It is said that in this place, the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed the people and mentioned the virtues of 'Ali (ﷺ). The Râfiḍis used this event as the basis for their extremist views concerning him on the one hand, and they relied on it with regard to his entitlement to the caliphate on the other hand. They gave this incident more importance than any other incident during the era of the Prophet (ﷺ).[513] A book of eleven volumes was written concerning it, entitled *Kitâb al-Ghadeer* (*The Book of Ghadeer*); this is a book whose author filled it with fabricated and weak hadiths.

The sound version of the hadith is that which was narrated by Imam Muslim in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* from the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam (ﷺ), who said: "One day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood and addressed us at a watering place called Khumm, between Makkah and Madinah. He praised and glorified Allah (ﷻ), and he exhorted and reminded us, then he said: 'O people, I am only human. Soon the messenger of my Lord will come to me, and I will respond. I am leaving among you two weighty things, the first of which is the Book of Allah, in which is guidance and light. Follow the Book of Allah and hold fast to it.' He encouraged us to adhere to the Book of Allah, then he said: 'And the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household.'" Ḥusayn [one of the narrators] asked him: "Who are the people of his household, O Zayd? Aren't his wives among the people of his household?" He said: "His wives are among the people of his household, but the people of his household are those to whom zakâh is forbidden after he is gone." Ḥusayn asked: "Who are they?" Zayd replied: "They are the family of 'Ali, the family of 'Aqeel, the family of Ja'far, and the family of 'Abbâs." He asked: "Was zakâh forbidden to all of these?" He answered: "Yes."[514]

It was narrated by scholars other than Muslim, such as at-Tirmidhi,[515] Aḥmad,[516] an-Nasâ'i in *al-Khaṣâ'iṣ*,[517] al-Ḥâkim[518] and others, with sound chains of narration, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "If I am a person's *mawla*,[519] 'Ali is also his mawla."[520] With regard to additional material, such as the words "O Allah, support those who support him and take as enemies those who take him as an enemy," this material is regarded as sound by some of the scholars, but the correct view is that it is not sound. As for the addition "support those who support him and humiliate those who humiliate him, and make

truth connected to him wherever he goes," this is something that is attributed falsely to the Prophet (ﷺ).[521]

There was a good reason for the speech given by the Prophet (ﷺ) at Ghadeer Khumm. It was narrated that: "The Prophet (ﷺ) sent 'Ali to Khâlid ibn al-Waleed in Yemen to work out the one-fifth of the booty and take it. When he had worked out the one-fifth of the booty, there was a slave woman among the one-fifth who was the best of the female captives and had ended up being counted as part of the one-fifth. Then 'Ali (ﷺ) came out with his head covered, and he had done ghusl. They asked him about that, and he told them that the slave woman who had been among the prisoners had become his, and he had been intimate with her. Some of them objected to that, and Buraydah ibn al-Ḥuṣayb brought the letter of Khâlid to the Prophet (ﷺ). Buraydah was one of those who did not like 'Ali (ﷺ), and he confirmed the contents of Khâlid's letter, which referred to what 'Ali (ﷺ) had done. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'Do not hate him, for he has more right to the one-fifth than that.'"[522]

When the Farewell Pilgrimage took place, 'Ali (ﷺ) returned from Yemen to join the hajj and brought the sacrificial animals with him.[523] He appointed one of his companions to be in charge of the troops, and he hastened to meet the Messenger (ﷺ) in Makkah. That man gave the troops some garments that 'Ali (ﷺ) had, and when the army drew close to Makkah, 'Ali (ﷺ) went out to meet them and saw them wearing those suits. He said to his deputy: "Woe to you, what is this?" He said: "I clothed them like this today so that they would look good when they came to the people." 'Ali said: "Woe to you, take them off before you meet the Messenger (ﷺ)." So the deputy took away the suits and put them with the rest of the garments, and the army started to complain about what 'Ali (ﷺ) had done to them.[524] When the people complained about 'Ali (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood up to address them. Ibn Katheer said:

"There was a lot of talk and complaining about 'Ali (ﷺ) from that army, because he had prevented them from using the zakâh camels and had taken back the suits that his deputy had let them have. And Allah (ﷻ) knows best."

When the Messenger (ﷺ) was on his way back to Madinah after finishing his hajj rituals, he passed by Ghadeer Khumm. There he addressed the people and defended 'Ali (ﷺ), confirming his high status and pointing out his virtues so as to remove whatever negative feelings the people might have developed about him.[525]

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not give this speech when he was in Makkah during the Farewell Pilgrimage on the day of 'Arafah; instead he delayed the matter until he was on his way back to Madinah. This indicates that the matter concerned the people of Madinah only. Those who spoke against 'Ali (ﷺ) were from among the people of Madinah, as they were the ones who were with 'Ali on that campaign. Ghadeer Khumm is in al-Juḥfah, which is approximately 250 km from Makkah. Those who say that it was the point where the pilgrims part ways are not correct; the gathering point of the pilgrims is Makkah, so the place where the pilgrims part ways could not be as far as 250 km away. The people of Makkah stay in Makkah, the people of Ṭâ'if return to Ṭâ'if, the people of Yemen return to Yemen, the people of Iraq return to Iraq, the Arab tribes return to their original places and so on; when they have finished their hajj, each returns to his own land. There was no one with the Prophet (ﷺ) except the people of Madinah and those who were on their way to their homes along the road to Madinah, so these are the people whom the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed.

The difference between the Sunnis and the Râfiḍi Shia has to do with their understanding of what the Prophet (ﷺ) said, not whether or not he said it. The Râfiḍis say that the words "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla" mean: "Whoever I am in

charge of, 'Ali is also in charge of." The Sunnis say that what is meant by the Prophet's words "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla" refers to support and love, the opposite of which is enmity. This is correct for a number of reasons:

1.a.

This was classed as sound by some scholars because of the additional material, namely the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "O Allah, support those who support him, and take as an enemy those who take him as an enemy."[526] Enmity explains the phrase " 'Ali is also his mawla," so it refers to people loving 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه).

1.b.

The word mawla may indicate a number of meanings. Ibn al-Atheer said: "It may be applied to the master, owner, benefactor, supporter, one who loves, ally, slave, freed slave, cousin (son of paternal uncle) or son-in-law."[527] The Arabs give all of these meanings to the word mawla.

1.c.

There is no evidence in the hadith for the idea of imamate (caliphate). If the Prophet (ﷺ) had been referring to caliphate, he would not have used a word that may have all of these meanings that were mentioned by Ibn al-Atheer. The Prophet (ﷺ) was the most eloquent of the Arabs, and he would have said clearly, " 'Ali is my successor after me," or " 'Ali is the ruler after me," or "If I die, then listen to and obey 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib." However, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not say any of these decisive words that could have put an end to the dispute if any arose. He said: "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla."[528]

1.d.

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Your abode is the fire. That is your *mawlâ* [friend — proper place], and worst indeed is that destination﴾ *(Qur'an*

57: 15). He called it mawla because it is close to the disbelievers — we seek refuge with Allah (ﷻ).

1.e.

In the case of 'Ali (ﷺ), the fact that he is a mawla was proven during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and after his death, and after the death of 'Ali (ﷺ). 'Ali (ﷺ) was the mawla of the believers after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he was a mawla to the believers after his own death (ﷺ). Even now he is our mawla, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Verily, your *Wali* [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 55).* 'Ali (ﷺ) is one of the leaders of the believers.

1.f.

Imam ash-Shâfa'i said concerning the hadith of Zayd: What is meant by that is the concept of love for the sake of Islam, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾That is because Allah is the *Mawlâ* [Lord, Master, Helper, Protector] of those who believe, and the disbelievers have no *Mawlâ* [lord, master, helper, protector]﴿ *(Qur'an 47: 11).*[529] So the hadith does not say that 'Ali (ﷺ) should be the caliph after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); it indicates that 'Ali is one of the close friends of Allah (ﷻ) to whom love and support is due for the sake of Allah (ﷻ).[530]

In general, in this speech given in Ghadeer Khumm, the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to confirm the good character of 'Ali (ﷺ), raise his status and point out his virtues, so as to remove the ideas harboured by some of these companions who had been with him in Yemen, who had developed reservations about some of his conduct. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not want to do that during hajj, because even though this incident had become widely known, it remained limited to the people of Madinah. On the other hand, he did not delay it until he reached Madinah, lest the hypocrites take

advantage of this incident in order to plot against the Muslims.[531] There is another indication that the Prophet (ﷺ) intended in this speech to point out the virtues of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) to those who were unaware of them. When Buraydah ibn al-Ḥuṣayb began to criticise 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) in his presence — because he felt that 'Ali was no longer showing him kindness — the Prophet's expression changed, and he said: "O Buraydah, am I not closer to the believers than their own selves?" Buraydah said: "Yes indeed, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla."[532]

Some valuable research on this topic has been undertaken by Dr. Muhammad 'Ali as-Saloos, who discussed the speech at Ghadeer and the advice to adhere to the Qur'an and Sunnah. He studied the reports about adhering to the Qur'an and Sunnah and the reports about adhering to the Qur'an and the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) and examined them critically, then he said: "From the above, we can see that the hadith of the two weighty matters is one of the hadiths which are sound in both chain of narration and text. However, of the eight reports which enjoin adhering to the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) alongside the noble Qur'an, not one of them is free of some weakness in the chain of narration."[533] The texts of these reports say that the Qur'an and Ahl al-Bayt will never separate until they come to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) at the reservoir, and because of this, it is essential to adhere to both. In fact, the reality is contrary to these reports. Some of the supporters (Shia) of Ahl al-Bayt went astray and led others astray. Most of the groups that plotted against Islam and its people found in Shiism and love for Ahl al-Bayt a screen to conceal and protect them, and you may find that some of those who claim to be descendants of Ahl al-Bayt encourage them for worldly interests, such as taking one-fifth from the wealth acquired by their followers.

Avoiding going astray can only be achieved by adhering to the Qur'an and Sunnah. If Ahl al-Bayt adhere to both, then they have

both the virtue of descent [from the Prophet (ﷺ)] and the virtue of adherence (to the Qur'an and Sunnah), and deserve to be leaders of guidance whose example we follow, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And make us leaders of the *Muttaqoon* [the pious]﴿ *(Qur'an 25: 74)*. This means leaders who follow the example of those who came before us, and whose example will be followed by those who come after us. This is not limited to Ahl al-Bayt; rather it applies to all who adhere to the Qur'an and Sunnah. In the case of reports with chains of narration that were classed as weak, the text itself does not make sense either, and this is a further weakness. Despite all that, even if these reports were sound, that would not offer any proof at all for the imamate of the twelve or their entitlement to the caliphate.[534]

The great scholar al-Mannâwi said in *Fiqh Riwâyât al-Ḥadeeth*: "If you follow the commands of His Book and heed its prohibitions, and follow the guidance and example of my family, you will be guided and will not go astray."[535]

Ibn Taymiyah said, after stating that this hadith is weak and cannot be sound: "A number of scholars responded with a comment indicating that Ahl al-Bayt would never agree on misguidance. They said: 'We say that as al-Qâḍi Abu Ya'la and others said it.'" He also said: "The consensus of the Ummah is binding proof on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah and scholarly consensus. Ahl al-Bayt are part of the Ummah, so if there is consensus among the Ummah, it implies that there is consensus among Ahl al-Bayt."[536]

The hadith of the two weighty matters is the report in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I am leaving behind among you that which, if you adhere to it, you will never go astray after I am gone: the Book of Allah and my family."[537] There is some discussion as to whether it is sound and can be proven to be from the Prophet (ﷺ). What is proven in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* is that the command was to adhere to the Book of Allah, and the instruction was to show respect and kindness to Ahl al-

Bayt, as we have seen in the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam in Muslim. The Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined adherence to the Book of Allah, then he said: "And the people of my household. I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household." What he enjoined was adherence to the Qur'an. With regard to Ahl al-Bayt, the Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined taking care of them and giving them their rights, which had been granted to them by Allah (ﷻ).[538]

The refutation of the distorted Shiite understanding of the hadith of the two weighty matters is as follows:

(a) A man's family are the members of his household, and the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) are those to whom zakâh was forbidden. They are Banu Hâshim, who are the family of the Prophet (ﷺ). The Râfiḍis have no chains of narration going back to the Messenger (ﷺ), and they admit that they have no chains of narration for the narrations in their books. Rather they are books that they found and said: "They narrated it, so it must be true."[539] As for their chains of narration, as al-Hurr al-'Âmili and other Râfiḍi Shiite scholars said: "The Shia have no chains of narration at all, and they do not rely on chains of narration."[540] So how can they prove what they narrated in their books from the family of the Prophet (ﷺ)? Rather it is Ahl as-Sunnah (the Sunnis) who were the followers of the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) and respected their rights, and did not add or subtract anything, since the Prophet (ﷺ) said concerning himself: "Do not praise me as the Christians praised 'Eesa the son of Maryam; rather say: The slave of Allah and His Messenger."[541]

(b) The leader of the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) was 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه), and after him in knowledge comes Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, who was the scholar of the Ummah and who believed in

the caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar before 'Ali (ﷺ). In fact, it is proven in mutawâtir reports that 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "The best of the people after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) are Abu Bakr and 'Umar."[542] So 'Ali (ﷺ) affirmed the superiority of the two shaykhs (Abu Bakr and 'Umar), even though he was the head of the family of the Prophet (ﷺ).[543]

(c) This hadith is like the hadith in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I am leaving behind among you that which, if you adhere to it, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah."[544] The Prophet also said: "You must adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me; hold on firmly to it."[545] He enjoined clinging firmly to it and said: "Follow the example of those who come after me: Abu Bakr and 'Umar."[546] He also said: "Follow the guidance of 'Ammâr, and adhere to the advice of Ibn Mas'ood."[547] This does not refer to imamate at all; rather it indicates that these people were following the guidance of the Messenger (ﷺ). Similarly, the family of the Messenger (ﷺ) can never agree upon misguidance.[548]

(d) The Râfiḍi Shia undermine the status of al-'Abbâs,[549] his son Abdullah and the sons of al-Ḥasan, by saying that they were jealous of the sons of al-Ḥusayn. They also undermine the status of the sons of al-Ḥusayn himself, apart from those who they claim were Imams, such as Zayd ibn 'Ali.[550] They also undermine the status of Ibrâheem, the brother of al-Ḥasan al-'Askari,[551] and others. As such, they are not supporters of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his family; the supporters of the Prophet and his family are those who praised them and respected their rights, and did not undermine their status.[552]

(e) How the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) understood the text. The Companions (ﷺ) understood that what was meant was love, support and obedience. Hence they

expressed their obedience and respect to the leader of Ahl al-Bayt, 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, by calling him 'our mawla'. It was narrated that Riyâḥ al-Ḥârith said: "Some people came to 'Ali in ar-Raḥbah and said: 'Peace be upon you, O our mawla.' He said: 'How can I be your mawla when you are Arabs?' They said: 'We heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say on the day of Ghadeer Khumm: "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla."'" Riyâḥ said: "When they left, I followed and asked: 'Who are these people?' They said: 'Some of the Anṣâr, among whom was Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣâri.'"[553]

The most important thing we learn from this hadith is that 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) himself did not understand the word 'mawla' as referring to imamate and rulership. It may be noted that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) found it strange that they called him 'our mawla'. If Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), who was an Arab and had a good command of the language, thought it was synonymous with 'Amir' (ruler) or 'Imam' (caliph), why would he find it strange that the people were calling him by this title?[554]

(f) The books of the Twelver Shia narrated some reports of Ahl al-Bayt in which they denied that what is meant in the hadith of Ghadeer Khumm is the imamate or rulership of 'Ali (ﷺ) after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was said to Imam al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali, who was the leader of the descendants of 'Ali (ﷺ) at his time, the appointed heir of his father and the one who was in charge of his grandfather's charity: "Didn't the Messenger of Allah say 'If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla'"? He said: "Yes indeed, but the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not mean thereby imamate and rulership. If he had meant that, he would have said it clearly to them." His son, Imam Abdullah, said: "We do not have any right concerning this issue (rulership) that no one else has, and there is no one among Ahl al-Bayt who

is appointed by Allah as an Imam (ruler) whom everyone should obey." He denied that the imamate or caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ) was on the instruction of Allah (ﷻ).[555] If these are the words of Ahl al-Bayt, and they are the descendants and supporters of 'Ali (ﷺ), what do you think others should say?[556]

2. The hadith about 'Ali (ﷺ) being appointed in charge of Madinah when the Prophet (ﷺ) went to Tabook

The campaign to Tabook took place in Rajab 9 AH. This was a very important event in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), in which he achieved goals that had a far-reaching effect on the Muslims and the Arabs, and on the course of Islamic history.[557] The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali (ﷺ) in charge of Madinah, and the hypocrites found an opportunity to express what was in their hearts of resentment and hypocrisy. They started talking about 'Ali (ﷺ) in offensive terms, such as saying: "He [meaning the Prophet (ﷺ)] only left him behind because he finds him burdensome." This talk about him on their part was a clear and prominent sign of their hypocrisy. According to the sound hadith, 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "By the One Who split the seed and created the soul, the unlettered Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed to me that no one loves me except a believer, and no one hates me except a hypocrite."[558]

At that point, he went and caught up with the army and wanted to go on the campaign with them. He said: "O Messenger of Allah, why did you leave me behind with the children and women?" The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Does it not please you to be to me like Haroon was to Moosa, except that there is no Prophet after me?"[559] There is nothing in this hadith to support what the Shia understand from it, that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) was the successor of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). That view may be refuted in several ways:

2.a.

There is an important reason for this hadith, and we should not try to understand the hadith without looking at that reason. The hypocrites had criticised 'Ali (ﷺ), so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) explained his status and virtue and proved that the hypocrites were telling lies.

2.b.

It is proven that Haroon (ﷺ) died before Moosa (ﷺ); therefore, quoting this hadith as evidence for the imamate of 'Ali after the Messenger of Allah is not valid. If the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had wanted to appoint 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) as his heir, he would have said to him for example: "You are to me like Joshua to Moosa," because the Prophet of Allah Joshua (ﷺ) became the leader of the children of Israel after the death of Moosa (ﷺ). However, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mentioned Haroon (ﷺ), who was Moosa's deputy while Moosa was alive, not after he died. This can only mean one thing, which was that he wanted to calm 'Ali (ﷺ) down, as he was upset because the Messenger (ﷺ) had left him behind in Madinah to be in charge of the weak, the women and children and those who had stayed behind from the campaign. The Prophet (ﷺ) explained to him that just as Moosa (ﷺ) had left his brother Haroon (ﷺ) in charge of his people when he went to Sinai to meet his Lord (ﷻ), the Prophet's leaving 'Ali (ﷺ) behind was of the same nature. Moosa did not leave Haroon behind because he thought little of him or to undermine his status; he did it because he trusted him, and this was also the case with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ).

2.c.

Haroon (ﷺ) was not the appointed heir of Moosa (ﷺ); he was a Prophet and a helper, according to the text of the Qur'an. Making an analogy with Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), who according to the Shia was an appointed heir and not a Prophet, is an

analogy with a difference, although they reject the concept of analogy in the first place.

2.d.

Citing as evidence the fact that Haroon (ﷺ) was a helper to Moosa (ﷺ) in order to demonstrate that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was a helper to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is even stranger than the previous example. That is because Allah (ﷻ), Who made Haroon (ﷺ) a helper to His Prophet Moosa (ﷺ), mentioned in His Book the request of Moosa (ﷺ): ﴾And appoint for me a helper from my family, Hâroon [Aaron], my brother. Increase my strength with him, And let him share my task [of conveying Allah's Message and prophethood].﴿ *(Qur'an 20: 29-32)*

Do those who think that the two cases are identical believe that 'Ali (ﷺ) was a partner with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in his prophethood, as was the case when Haroon (ﷺ) shared the task of Moosa (ﷺ)? Whoever believes that is undoubtedly a disbeliever who is beyond the pale of Islam.[560]

2.e.

At other times, the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed people other than 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) to be in charge of Madinah. During the campaign of Badr, he appointed Abdullah ibn Umm Maktoom; during the campaign of Sulaym, he appointed Sibâ' ibn 'Urṭafah al-Ghifâri or Ibn Umm Maktoom, according to different opinions; during the campaign of as-Saweeq, he appointed Basheer ibn 'Abdul-Mundhir; during the campaign of Banul-Muṣṭaliq, he appointed Abu Dharr al-Ghifâri; during the campaign of Ḥudaybiyah, he appointed Numaylah ibn Abdullah al-Laythi, whom he also appointed during the campaign of Khaybar; during 'Umrat al-Qaḍa', he appointed 'Uwayf ibn al-Aḍbaṭ ad-Dayli; during the conquest of Makkah, he appointed Kulthoom ibn Huṣayn ibn

'Utbah al-Ghifâri; and during the Farewell Pilgrimage, he appointed Abu Dhujânah. This was stated by Ibn Hishâm in various places in his biography of the Prophet (ﷺ).[561] Moreover, appointing 'Ali in charge of Madinah (on this occasion) was not the last time this was done. During the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed someone other than 'Ali to be in charge of Madinah. This was the Prophet's way of training leaders, as when he appointed Abu Bakr in charge of the hajj. Abu Bakr was also the only one whom he asked to lead the people in prayer.[562]

2.f.

The Prophet's likening 'Ali to Haroon was an honour, just as the Prophet (ﷺ) likened Abu Bakr and 'Umar to people greater than Haroon. During the battle of Badr, when the issue of prisoners of war arose, the Prophet (ﷺ) consulted Abu Bakr, who thought that he should pardon them and let their people ransom them. 'Umar, on the other hand, thought that they should be executed. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to Abu Bakr (ﷺ): "Your likeness is that of Ibrâheem (ﷺ) on the day when he said: ﴾But whoso follows me, he verily, is of me. And whoso disobeys me, still You are indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴿ *(Qur'an 14: 36)*; and your likeness is the likeness of 'Eesa (ﷺ) when he said: ﴾If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, verily, You, only You, are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 118)*." Then he turned to 'Umar (ﷺ) and said: "O 'Umar, your likeness is the likeness of Nooh (ﷺ) when he said: ﴾My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth!﴿ *(Qur'an 71: 26)*; and your likeness is the likeness of Moosa (ﷺ) when he said: ﴾Our Lord! Destroy their wealth, and harden their hearts, so that they will not believe until they see the painful torment.﴿ *(Qur'an 10: 88)*"[563]

The Prophet (ﷺ) likened Abu Bakr to Ibrâheem and 'Eesa, and he likened 'Umar to Nooh and Moosa. These are all 'Messengers

of strong will', and they are the best of mankind after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); they are also superior to Haroon by several degrees (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon them all). Therefore the Prophet's likening 'Ali to Haroon was an honour to him, just as the Prophet (ﷺ) honoured Abu Bakr and 'Umar when he likened them to Ibrâheem and 'Eesa, and Moosa and Nooh (peace be upon them).[564]

2.g. Comments of the scholars on the hadith

An-Nawawi said: "There is no proof in this hadith for any of them; rather it confirms the virtue of 'Ali, but there is no indication in it that he is better than anyone else or like anyone else, and there is no indication in it that he is to be appointed caliph after him, because the Prophet (ﷺ) only said that to 'Ali when he left him in charge in Madinah during the campaign to Tabook. This is supported by the fact that Haroon, to whom he likened him, was not the successor of Moosa; rather he died during Moosa's lifetime, approximately forty years before the death of Moosa, according to what is well known from the accounts narrated by the storytellers, who said that he was only appointed to be in charge when Moosa went to speak with his Lord at the time and place appointed by Him."[565]

Ibn Ḥazm (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after mentioning the Râfiḍis' quoting this hadith as evidence: "This does not indicate that he is superior to others or that he was entitled to the caliphate after him, because Haroon did not take charge of the children of Israel after Moosa (ﷺ) died; rather the one who took charge after Moosa (ﷺ) died was Joshua, the servant of Moosa and his companion, who travelled with him to seek al-Khiḍr (ﷺ). Similarly, the one who took charge after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died was the one who had been his companion in the cave, who travelled with him to Madinah. Since we know that 'Ali was not a prophet, unlike Haroon who was a prophet, and Haroon was not a

successor who was to lead the children of Israel after the death of Moosa, then it is true to say that the way in which he was to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as Haroon was to Moosa was only in terms of being closely related. Moreover, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) only said this to him when he appointed him in charge of Madinah during the campaign to Tabook; before and after that, he (ﷺ) appointed men other than 'Ali in charge of Madinah when he travelled. So it is true to say that this appointment did not mean that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was superior to others or that he was to be the ruler after him, just as it did not mean that for the others who were appointed."[566]

Ibn Ḥajar said: "They quoted this hadith to prove that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), and no one else among the Companions, was entitled to the caliphate, because Haroon was the successor to Moosa. My response to that is that Haroon was not the successor of Moosa except during his lifetime (when he acted as his deputy), and not after Moosa's death, because he died before Moosa, according to consensus. That was referred to by al-Khaṭṭâbi."[567]

Ibn Taymiyah said, refuting the Râfiḍi Shia's use of this hadith as evidence: "If a person says this is like that, or this is akin to that, likening one to the other, this has to be understood in the right context; it does not mean that they are equal or identical in all ways. This is how we should understand it in this case, where 'Ali is described as being like Haroon. This appointment as deputy in charge of Madinah is not something unique to 'Ali; actually, this appointment was not at the same level as other cases when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed others to be in charge of Madinah, let alone better than it. Indeed, people to whom 'Ali was superior were left in charge during many campaigns, but these appointments did not mean that these people were superior to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) even if 'Ali stayed behind too. How can that mean that the person is superior to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) when more than one person was

appointed in charge of Madinah? Were those who were appointed also, in relation to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), like Haroon was to Moosa, because their appointments were like 'Ali's? Those appointments were over people who were greater in number and more prominent than those over whom 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was appointed at the time of Tabook, and the need to appoint someone in charge was greater, because the Prophet (ﷺ) was afraid that his enemies might attack Madinah. By the time of the Tabook campaign, the Arabs of the Hijaz had become Muslim, Makkah had been conquered and Islam had prevailed. Hence Allah (ﷻ) commanded His Prophet to go out on campaign, and he did not leave any fighters with 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), as he used to do during all other campaigns; instead he took all the fighters with him."[568]

2.h. The wisdom behind the Prophet's not singling out a specific person to take charge of the Ummah after him

The reason why the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not single out anyone to take charge of the Ummah after him becomes clear when we understand the reality of Islam as a divinely-revealed religion. If the Messenger (ﷺ) had appointed a man to rule after him, that would have given legitimate justification for people to claim — as they did without any evidence — that the right to leadership belonged to one particular family, and this hereditary rulership would have become the custom in Islam. However, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) — who did not speak on the basis of his whims and desires but only a Revelation revealed[569] — wanted to leave this matter completely to the Muslims to choose the one who was the most suited and the best of them. He gave some hints referring to Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), and he could have stated that clearly, but he did not do so for this reason; hinting does not give legitimacy for appointing him immediately after his death. If there had been any instruction appointing a specific

person, there could not have been any difference of opinion in the meeting in Saqeefah at the beginning. Abu Bakr (ﷺ) would not have consulted the people with regard to appointing 'Umar (ﷺ), 'Umar (ﷺ) would not have left the matter to be decided by the Muhâjireen, and so on. If it were the case that the matter was hereditary, Banu Hâshim would have been the most entitled to it.[570]

This religion is for all of mankind, and it is not right under any circumstances for it to be limited to one ruling family or to remain hereditary, like property. Even though that happened in subsequent eras, such as those of the Umayyads and the Abbasids and others, it is contrary to Sharia principles. Whatever is contrary to Sharia principles is alien to the religion of Allah (ﷻ), and such flawed concepts should be eliminated completely from Islamic thought so that it might be restored to its pure and correct state.[571]

The following are some of the weak and fabricated hadiths that the Imamis quote as evidence.

1. The hadith of the bird

One of the most important texts that the Imami Shia quote as evidence is the hadith of the roasted bird. Al-Hâkim narrated in *al-Mustadrak* that Anas ibn Mâlik (ﷺ) said: "I used to serve the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). A roasted chicken was offered to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he said: 'O Allah, bring me the dearest of Your creation to You so that he can eat this bird with me.' I said: 'O Allah, make him one of the Anṣâr.' 'Ali (ﷺ) came, and I said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is busy.' Then he came (again), and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Open the door.' He came in, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'What kept you, O 'Ali?' He said: 'This is the third time that Anas sent me back; he said that you were busy.' The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'What made you do that?' I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I heard your supplication, and I wanted it to be a

man from among my people.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Any man loves his people.'"[572]

This hadith was narrated via a number of chains of narration, none of which is free from flaws. Moreover, there are many (similar) reports with chains of narration going back to Anas (رضي الله عنه), and the fact that none of these chains of narration is sound is something astonishing. Why did the companions of Anas not narrate this hadith, when they accompanied him for many years? We have not seen even one of them narrate this hadith, and they are known for their trustworthiness and accuracy. People such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri, Thâbiṭ al-Banâni, Ḥumayd aṭ-Ṭaweel, Ḥabeeb ibn Abi Thâbit, Bakr ibn Abdullah al-Muzani, As'ad ibn Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, Isḥâq ibn Abdullah ibn Abi Ṭalḥah, Abân ibn Ṣâliḥ, Ibrâheem ibn Maysarah narrated from Anas, as well as many others who are not known.

Ibn Katheer said: "Then I came across a large volume by al-Qâḍi Abu Bakr al-Bâqillâni proving that it (the hadith of the bird) is rejected and weak in terms of both its chain of narration and its text."[573] Ibn al-Jawzi said: "Ibn Mardawayh narrated it via twenty chains of narration, all of which are weak or flawed and have something wrong with them, so he did not think there was any need to discuss it in detail."[574] Ibn Taymiyah said: "The hadith of the bird is one of the false and fabricated reports, according to the scholars who know about transmission of reports and chains of narration."[575] Az-Zayla'i said: "How often one finds hadiths that were narrated by so many and have so many chains of narration, yet they are weak."[576]

2. The hadith of the house

Another of the hadiths that the Twelver Shia quote as evidence that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was named as the successor of the Prophet (ﷺ) is the hadith of the house. The Shia think that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) as the Imam from the outset of his mission, from

the time he began calling the disbelievers of Makkah to Islam and asking them to abandon idols and worship Allah (ﷻ) alone.

According to this hadith, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "When the verse ﴾And warn your tribe [O Muhammad] of near kindred﴿ *(Qur'an 26: 214)* was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he called me and said: 'O 'Ali, Allah has commanded me to warn your tribe of near kindred. I felt anxious about that, and I thought that if I started telling them about this matter, I would see from them something that I would not like, so I kept quiet until Jibreel (عليه السلام) came to me and said: "O Muhammad, unless you do what you are instructed to do, your Lord will punish you." So make a *ṣâ'* [a measurement roughly equivalent to three kilograms, or four times the volume of a *mudd*] of food for us and put a leg of mutton on it, and fill a vessel with milk for us, then call Banu 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib for me so that I may speak to them and convey what I have been instructed to convey.' So I ('Ali) did what he told me, then I called them for him. At that time, they were forty men, more or less, among whom were his maternal uncles Abu Ṭâlib, Ḥamzah, al-'Abbâs and Abu Lahab. When they had gathered with him, he called me to bring the food that I had made for them, and I brought it. When I put it down, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) picked up a piece of meat and tore it apart with his teeth, then he spread it throughout the platter and said: 'Take in the name of Allah.' The people ate until they were full, and I could not see anything but the imprint of their hands. By Allah in whose hand is my soul, all of them ate their fill, even though one man could have eaten everything that was on the plate. Then he said: 'Give the people to drink.' So I brought that vessel and they drank until they had all drunk their fill by Allah, even though one man could have drunk it all.

"When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to speak to them, Abu Lahab spoke up first (and did not give him a chance to speak), saying: 'Your companion has bewitched you.' So the people

departed, and the Messenger of Allah did not speak to them. He said: 'Tomorrow, O 'Ali (we will do the same thing). This man spoke first; you heard what he said, and the people departed before I could speak to them. Prepare for us the same food as before, then gather them to me.' So I did that, and I gathered them together. Then he called for the food, and I brought it to them, and he did the same as he had done the day before. They ate until they were full, then he said: 'Give them to drink.' So I brought that vessel, and they drank until they had all drunk their fill.

"Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) spoke and said: 'O Banu 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, I do not know of any young man among the Arabs who brought his people anything better than what I have brought to you. I have brought you the best of this world and the hereafter. Allah has commanded me to call you to Him. Which of you will support me in this matter and be my brother and my appointed heir and my successor among you?' ('Ali said:) All of them refrained, but I — and I was the youngest of them, with the bleariest eyes, biggest belly and thinnest legs[577] — said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I will be your supporter in this matter.' He took hold of my neck and said: 'This is my brother, my appointed heir and my successor among you; listen to him and obey.' The people started laughing and saying to Abu Ṭâlib: He has commanded you to listen to your son and obey him."

According to another version: "No one responded to him, but 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) stood up and said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Sit down.' Then he repeated it to the people a second time, and they kept quiet, but 'Ali stood up and said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Sit down.' Then he repeated it to the people a third time, and they kept quiet but 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) stood up and said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Sit down, you are my brother.'"[578]

This hadith is false in terms of both its chain of narration and its text. As for its chain of narration, it includes 'Abdul-Ghaffâr ibn

al-Qâsim and Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Quddoos. As for 'Abdul-Ghaffâr ibn al-Qâsim, he is unreliable and his hadiths are rejected; he cannot be quoted as evidence. 'Ali ibn al-Madeeni said concerning him: "He fabricated hadith." Yaḥya ibn Ma'een said: "He is nothing."[579] 'Abbâs ibn Yaḥya narrated: "He is nothing." Bukhari said: "He is not strong according to them" — meaning the scholars who examined the soundness of narrators. Ibn Ḥibbân said concerning him: "He alters reports, and it is not permissible to quote him as evidence." He was rejected by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥya ibn Ma'een. An-Nasâ'i said: "His hadith is to be rejected."[580] Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Quddoos is no better than his predecessor; his hadith is to be rejected as well, according to the majority of hadith scholars. An-Nasâ'i said: "He is not trustworthy." Ad-Dâraquṭni said: "He is weak."[581]

With regard to the text of the hadith, it is clearly false for a number of reasons, namely:

2.a. This report is contrary to another report, which the scholars of hadith are agreed is sound and proven. It was narrated by Bukhari and Muslim in their collections of sound hadiths from Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) that he said: "When the verse ﴾And warn your tribe [O Muhammad] of near kindred﴿ *(Qur'an 26: 214)* was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) ascended the hill of Ṣafâ and started calling out: 'O Banu Fihr, O Banu 'Adiy,' calling the clans of Quraysh until they gathered. Those who could not come themselves sent their messengers to see what was there. Abu Lahab and other people from Quraysh came, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'If I told you that there was an army in this valley marching to attack you, would you believe me?' They said: 'Yes; we have never known you to be anything but truthful.' He said: 'I am a warner to you of impending severe punishment.' Abu Lahab said: 'May your hands perish for the rest of the day! Is it for this that you called us together?' Then it was revealed:

﴾Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab [an uncle of the Prophet] and perish he! His wealth and his children will not benefit him!﴿ *(Qur'an 111: 1-2)*"[582]

2.b. The Twelver Shia always claim that there is a clear text stating that 'Ali (ﷺ) should be the caliph, and that he is the rightfully appointed heir and the only one who deserved this position. They claim that the texts support one another to confirm that. However, this hadith proves their view to be flawed because in it, the Prophet (ﷺ) called these people to support him and said that whoever agreed to support him would become his brother, appointed heir and successor after he was gone. He did not single out 'Ali (ﷺ) for that; in fact, he overlooked him three times, and only when he did not find any other supporter did he say to him what he said. This indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not think that 'Ali (ﷺ) deserved the position at first, but that he accepted him in the role because he had no other choice after his people refused. Is this in accordance with what they claim, that 'Ali (ﷺ) was divinely appointed to this position?[583]

3. The hadith, "I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate..." and other fabricated hadiths

There are very many fabricated hadiths of this type. Jâbir ibn Abdullah narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate." This report is flawed, and it was rejected by Bukhari. Yaḥya ibn Ma'een said concerning it: "It has no basis." Ibn al-Jawzi quoted it in *al-Mawḍoo'ât (The Fabricated).* An-Nawawi and adh-Dhahabi said: "It is fabricated."[584] Al-Albâni said: "The hadith, 'I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate, so whoever desires knowledge let him come to the gate' is fabricated. It was narrated by al-'Aqeeli in *aḍ-Ḍu'afa'*, by Ibn 'Adiy in *al-Kâmil*, by aṭ-Ṭabarâni in *al-Kabeer* and by al-Ḥâkim from Ibn 'Abbâs. Ibn 'Adiy and al-Ḥâkim also narrated it from Jâbir (ﷺ)."[585]

The same may be said of the hadith, "Whoever opposes 'Ali's caliphate is a disbeliever." There is no trace of this whatsoever in the books of Ahl as-Sunnah.[586] These examples highlight the weakness of the reports on which the Râfiḍis rely as evidence to prove that 'Ali (ﷺ) was singled out and exclusively appointed as caliph. Ibn Khaldoon supported this when he said that the texts quoted and narrated by the Râfiḍi Shia, which they interpret in ways that support their views, are not known to the prominent scholars of the Sunnah or narrators of hadith; most of them are fabricated or flawed in their chains of narration or have nothing to do with the interpretations given to them.[587] What Ibn Ḥazm said, that all the hadiths to which the Râfiḍis adhere are fabricated, is something that anyone with the slightest knowledge of hadith and how the reports were narrated would know.[588]

The Shiite writer Ibn Abi al-Ḥadeed acknowledged the role of the Shia in fabricating hadiths to support their view regarding imamate. He said: "The original lies in the hadiths about the virtues (of 'Ali) were all started by the Shia, because they initially fabricated different hadiths about 'Ali, motivated by their grudges against their opponents. When the Bakris (meaning some of the Sunnis) saw what the Shia had done, they fabricated hadiths in favour of Abu Bakr, in response to these hadiths (about 'Ali). Then when the Shia saw what the Bakris had done, they went to extremes in fabricating hadiths. The two parties need not have done all that, because there are proven, sound reports about the virtues of 'Ali and the virtues of Abu Bakr, which are well established and known, which meant that there was no need for all of this extremism."[589]

Despite the weakness of this evidence, we find that some of the contemporary Shia are still repeating it in their books and quoting it to prove their beliefs about imamate. One of them is of the view that the Messenger (ﷺ) would not have been regarded as having

conveyed the message if he did not appoint 'Ali to be the caliph after him.[590] He says: "Allah spoke to the noble Messenger through revelation, telling him to convey what Allah had sent down to him with regard to who was to succeed him in running the people's affairs. Because of this instruction, he conveyed what he was commanded to do and he appointed Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali to be the caliph."[591] This view of theirs is contrary to the verses and hadiths they quote as evidence for imamate, because the implication of this view is that until the incident of Ghadeer Khumm, Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) did not mention 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) by name to be the Imam.

It is sufficient criticism of the Shias' imamate theory to note that they have no proof for it except the words of Abdullah ibn Saba'. He was the Jew who started spreading the idea that imamate was based on instructions from the Prophet (ﷺ) and was limited to the one mentioned by the revelation, and that if anyone else took charge of it, he should be disavowed and regarded as a disbeliever. The books of the Shia admit that Ibn Saba' was the first one to spread the idea that the imamate of 'Ali was obligatory and to express disavowal of his enemies, stand up to his opponents and regard them as disbelievers.[592] He was of Jewish origin and thought that Joshua (عليه السلام) was the appointed heir of Moosa (عليه السلام), so when he became Muslim, he applied this idea to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه).[593]

3.4. Tawḥeed and the Twelver Shia

The Shia regard belief in the Imam as a foundation of their madh-hab and one of the pillars of their faith. In their view, the Imam is part of belief, and they attribute to one of their Imams the idea that whoever of this Ummah has no Imam to follow will go astray and be lost, and that if he dies in that state, he will have died a death of jâhiliyyah.[594] That is because the Imam, according to the Shiite

concept, is something completely different from the caliph as all Muslims understand the concept. The Muslims regard the imam (leader) or caliph of the Muslims as an ordinary person with regard to his make-up and knowledge, and his role does not go beyond implementing the laws of Allah (ﷻ). It is possible for him to err or to deviate, as is possible for all other people, so he must be corrected and opposed if he goes against the command of Allah (ﷻ). Over and above that, the caliph is to be chosen and elected by the Muslim community on the basis of consultation.[595]

In contrast, the Shia believe that the Imams were lights before this universe came into being, and that they have authority over the universe in addition to their authority as rulers of the people. They attribute to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) a hadith, which they traced back to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ).[596] One of the contemporary Shiite imams says: "The fact that the Imam has the proven right to authority and rulership does not mean giving up his status that he has before Allah, and it does not make him like other rulers. The Imam has a high status, sublime position and universal authority whereby all the atoms of the universe are subject to that authority. One of the fundamentals of our madh-hab is that our Imams occupy a status that was not attained by any angel who is close to Allah or any Prophet who was sent. According to the reports and hadiths that we have, the greatest Messenger (ﷺ) and the Imams (ﷺ) were lights before this universe came into existence. Allah placed them surrounding His throne and bestowed upon them high status and closeness to Him that no one knows except Allah. Jibreel said, as is narrated in the reports of the Prophet's ascent to heaven: 'If I come one fingertip closer, I will be burned.' It was narrated from them (ﷺ) (that they said): 'We go through some states of being that no angel who is close to Allah, and no Prophet who was sent, ever went through.'"[597]

According to this concept of the Imam, his role is not limited to implementing the laws of Allah; he actually has dominion over the

affairs and events of the universe. In their view, 'Ali (ﷺ) is the legitimate, dominant ruler with Sharia authority over the affairs of the land and the people. The angels submit to him, and the people are subjugated to him, even his enemies. They are subject to the truth when he stands and when he sits; when he speaks and when he is silent; when he delivers speeches, prays and fights.[598] Because of this exaggeration, the Shiite belief in the Imams had an impact on their belief in the Oneness of Allah (tawḥeed), which may be explained as follows:

3.4.1. Their interpretation of the texts on tawḥeed as referring to the imamate (authority) of the Imams

The first thing that we find shocking is that they altered the meaning of the texts of the Qur'an, which enjoin worshipping Allah (ﷻ) alone, to suggest believing in the imamate of 'Ali (ﷺ) and the Imams, and they interpreted the texts which forbid associating partners with Allah (ﷻ) as referring to partners in the authority of the Imams.

In *al-Kâfi*,[599] which is the soundest of their books in narration; *Tafseer al-Qummi*,[600] which is the foremost of their books of Qur'anic commentary; and other major reference works,[601] the interpretation of the verse ﴿And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], as it was to those [Allah's Messengers] before you: 'If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain...'﴾ *(Qur'an 39: 65)* is as follows:

"This means: if you associate someone else with him in imamate."[602] In another version, the meaning is: "If you enjoin the authority of someone else alongside the authority of 'Ali after you [O Muhammad], then all your deeds will be in vain."[603] In his interpretation of the Qur'an, the author of *al-Burhân* quoted four

reports of theirs to explain the verse in accordance with the meanings mentioned above.[604] With regard to the reason for its revelation, they said, "When Allah (ﷻ) revealed to His Prophet (ﷺ) that he should appoint 'Ali to be in charge of the people, Mu'âdh ibn Jabal snuck in and said to him: 'Associate with his authority the first and the second (referring to Abu Bakr and 'Umar), so that people could accept what you say and believe you.' But when the verse: ﴿O Messenger [Muhammad]! Proclaim [the Message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord﴾ *(Qur'an 5: 67)* was revealed, the Messenger of Allah complained to Jibreel, saying: 'The people may disbelieve me and not accept anything from me.' Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed the words ﴿And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], as it was to those [Allah's Messengers] before you: If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain...﴾ *(Qur'an 39: 65)*"

In order to understand the extent of their distortion of the verses of Allah (ﷻ) and their conspiracy to change the verse, we should look at the verse in context to see what comes before and after it. Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿Say [O Muhammad to the polytheists]: 'Do you order me to worship other than Allah, O you fools?' And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], as it was to those [Allah's Messengers] before you: 'If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers.' Nay! But worship Allah [Alone and none else], and be among the grateful.﴾ *(Qur'an 39: 64-66)*

The verse, as is clear from its context, has to do with worshipping Allah (ﷻ) alone, but they changed the meaning and regarded the verse as having to do with 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), even though there is no mention of him in the verse at all. It is as if they regarded him as the one referred to by the word 'Allah' and they interpreted the word 'worship' as referring to imamate. In reality, the meaning of the verse

is quite clear, and there is not the slightest connection between its true meaning and their interpretation.[605]

The scholars said, commenting on the meaning of this verse, "Allah (ﷻ) commanded His Prophet to say this to the polytheists when they called him to their religion of idol worship, saying, 'This is the religion of your forefathers.'"[606] What is meant is: "Say, O Muhammad, to the polytheists among your people: 'Are you commanding me to worship gods other than Allah, O you who are ignorant of Allah, when worship cannot be directed to anyone other than Him?'" Since the command to worship anyone other than Allah (ﷻ) can only come from one who is ignorant and foolish, He (ﷻ) gave them a befitting description when he said: ﴾O you fools!﴿ *(Qur'an 39: 64)* Then Allah (ﷻ) stated that He had revealed to His Prophet and to the Messengers before him: "If you associate anything or anyone else with Allah (ﷻ), your deeds will be in vain." This is to highlight the seriousness and abhorrent nature of polytheism; its seriousness is confirmed by the fact that the warning against it is addressed to one (namely, the Prophet) who would have nothing to do with it, so how about others? Then He (ﷻ) said: ﴾Nay! But worship Allah [Alone and none else]﴿ *(Qur'an 39: 66)*. Do not worship what the polytheists tell you to worship; rather worship Allah (ﷻ) alone, to the exclusion of all other false gods and idols.[607]

As one can see, the meaning is very clear. No one could misinterpret it except one who has an ulterior motive, whose whims and desires have blinded him to the truth. The main concern of this group who fabricated these reports, and their only objective, was to find support for their claim of imamate in the Qur'an, even if that meant distorting the words of Allah (ﷻ). Thus they distorted the meaning a great deal, and their interpretation was not based on any knowledge of Arabic or reason, let alone any religious text. It is also clear from the report they narrated that they were showing disrespect towards the Prophet (ﷺ) by depicting him as being scared and afraid

of his people and hesitant in carrying out the instructions of his Lord, to the extent that he could not overcome this attitude until the revelation of a threat that all his deeds would be in vain.[608]

3.4.2. Their opinion that belief in the imamate is the basis of deeds being accepted

They said that Allah (ﷻ) appointed 'Ali (ﷺ) to be the Imam as a sign between Him and His creation: "The one who recognises it is a believer, and the one who rejects it is a disbeliever; the one who does not know it is astray, and the one who sets up any rival to him is a polytheist; the one who comes (on the Day of Judgement) believing in his imamate will enter paradise."[609] They also said: "Whoever affirms our belief in imamate then dies, his prayer, fasting, zakâh and hajj will be accepted; but whoever does not affirm our belief in imamate before Allah (ﷻ), He will not accept any of his deeds."[610]

They claim that Jibreel (ﷺ) came down to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "O Muhammad, As-Salâm (a name of Allah that means The Source of Peace and Perfection) conveys salâm to you and says: 'I created the seven heavens and what is in them and the seven earths and what is on them, and I have not created any place greater than ar-Rukn (the corner of the Ka'bah) and Maqâm Ibrâheem. If any slave calls upon Me there, from the time I created the heavens and the earths, then he meets Me denying the imamate of 'Ali, I will throw him in hell.'"[611]

There are many similar reports; they are all false, and none of them is sound. All these reports have nothing to do with Islam at all. We have the Book of Allah (ﷻ), which is the final verdict and first reference point in any dispute; there is nothing of what they claim in it. The noble Qur'an states that the basic requirement with regard to deeds is tawḥeed, and the reason for doom is polytheism. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Verily, whosoever sets up partners [in worship] with Allah,

then Allah has forbidden paradise to him, and the fire will be his abode.﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 72)*

﴾Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him [in worship], but He forgives except that [anything else] to whom He wills.﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 48)*

Everything that we have mentioned here of the exaggerations of the Shia is proven false by the verses of the Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Surely, those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah, in His Messenger Muhammad and all that was revealed to him from Allah], and those who are the Jews and the Sabians and the Christians, — whosoever believed in Allah and the Last Day, and worked righteousness, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 69)*

The Shia claim that belief in the twelve Imams is more important than prayer and the other pillars of Islam, but prayer is mentioned in more than eighty places in the Qur'an, while their belief in imamate is not mentioned even once. Did Allah want to misguide His slaves? Did He not explain to them the way to reach Him? Glory be to You (O Allah)! This is a great lie.[612]

﴾And Allah will never lead a people astray, after He has guided them, until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid.﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 115)*

Among their reports are some that contradict what they said, but their misinterpretation and concept of taqiyyah led to the burying alive of these fair and moderate texts. We mention this so that the wise person may learn a lesson, the heedless person may pay attention, and the sleeper may wake up, and so as to establish proof against the stubborn from their own books and point out the contradictions in their own texts. It says in *Tafseer al-Furât* that 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "When the verse, ﴾Say [O Muhammad]: No reward do I ask of

you for this except to be kind to me for my kinship with you﴿ *(Qur'an 42: 23)* was revealed, Jibreel said: 'O Muhammad, every religion has a root and foundation, and branches and a structure. The root and foundation of this religion is saying *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* (There is none worthy of worship other than Allah), and its branches and structure are loving you, loving Ahl al-Bayt, and supporting you in what is in accordance with the truth and calling others to it.'"[613]

This text differs from what their other reports say; it describes tawḥeed, not belief in the imamate, as the basis of religion. It regards loving Ahl al-Bayt as one of the branches, which is limited to those among them who follow the truth and call others to it.[614]

3.4.3. Their belief that the Imams are the intermediaries between Allah (ﷻ) and His creation

The Imami Shia believe that the twelve Imams are the intermediaries between Allah and His creation. Al-Majlisi says of his Imams: "They are the doors to the Lord and the intermediaries between Him and His creation."[615] He wrote a chapter entitled: "The people can only be guided through them; they are the intermediaries between mankind and Allah (ﷻ), and no one will enter paradise except the one who acknowledges them." In *'Aqâ'id al-Imamiyyah*, it says that the twelve Imams are doors to Allah (ﷻ) and the way to Him; they are like the ship of Nooh (ﷺ) in that whoever embarks on it will be saved, and whoever stays away from it will drown.[616] Some of the issues that are to be found in their books and reference works, which emphasise these concepts, include the following:

3.4.3.a. Their belief that people have no guidance except through the Imams

Abu Abdullah, according to their claim, said: "The trouble we have with people is serious. If we call them, they do not respond to us, but if we leave them, they will not be guided by others."[617] Their

reports say: "Abu Ja'far said: 'By means of us, Allah is worshipped; by means of us, Allah is known; and by means of us, His Oneness is proclaimed.'"[618]

These texts do not say that the Ummah cannot be guided, but they make the Imams the source of guidance. In fact, guidance in the sense of being enabled to know and accept the truth is something that no one has control over except the Lord of mankind, the Controller of the hearts and minds, the One who comes in between a person and his heart,[619] the One Who says to a thing, "Be!" and it is.

The Shia, by stating these things in general terms without any restrictions, give their Imams a role alongside Allah with regard to the issue of guidance, but Allah (ﷻ) is the only One who guides people, with no partner or associate.[620] Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾He whom Allah guides, he is the rightly-guided; but he whom He sends astray, for him you will find no Wali [guiding friend] to lead him [to the Right Path]﴿ *(Qur'an 18: 17)*. Allah (ﷻ) said to His Prophet (ﷺ): ﴾Verily, you [O Muhammad] guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills.﴿ *(Qur'an 28: 56)*

With regard to guidance in the sense of telling people about the truth and showing them the way to it, this is the role of the Messengers and those who followed them in truth, and it is not limited to the twelve Imams. ﴾Say [O Muhammad]: 'This is my way; I invite unto Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me'﴿ *(Qur'an 12: 108)*. Saying that this guidance can only be achieved through the Imams is insolence towards Allah (ﷻ).[621]

3.4.3.b. Their belief that supplication cannot be answered except in the names of the Imams

They said that the one whose supplication is not in the name of the Imams will not prosper and will be doomed. It says in their report from the Imams: "The one who calls upon Allah in our name will

prosper, and the one who calls upon Him in the name of anyone other than us is doomed and destroyed."[622] Their audacity in that regard went so far that they said: "The supplication of the Prophets was answered by means of the names of the Imams and seeking their intercession, may the blessings of Allah be upon them all."[623]

This is what the Râfiḍi Shia say and fabricate, but Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And [all] the most beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 180)*. He does not say to call upon Him by the names of the Imams or the status of the Imams or their shrines. Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴾And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything]; I will respond to your [invocation]...'﴿ *(Qur'an 40: 60)*

If the condition for supplication being accepted was mentioning the names of the Imams, Allah (ﷻ) would have said: "Invoke Me by the names of the Imams; I will respond to your (invocation)." Instead, what the Shia claim and fabricate is actually one of the causes for supplications being rejected and not accepted, because devoting worship purely to Him alone when calling upon Him in supplication is the means of having the supplication answered and accepted. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴾So, call you [O Muhammad and the believers] upon [or invoke] Allah making [your] worship pure for Him [Alone] [by worshipping none but Him and by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only and not to show off and not to set up rivals with Him in worship], however much the disbelievers [in the Oneness of Allah] may hate [it].﴿ *(Qur'an 40: 14)*

﴾And invoke Him only making your religion sincere to Him [by not joining in worship any partner with Him and with the intention that you are doing your deeds for Allah's sake only].﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 29)*

These Imams are just like other humans: ﴾Verily, those whom you call upon besides Allah are slaves like you. So call upon them and let them answer you if you are truthful.﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 194)*

Allah (ﷻ) has not appointed any righteous man, angel who is close to Him, or Prophet who was sent, to be a mediator between Him and His creation; all are slaves of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾The Messiah will never be proud to reject to be a slave of Allah, nor the angels who are near [to Allah].﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 172)*

﴾There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Gracious [Allah] as a slave.﴿ *(Qur'an 19: 93)*

As for the contention that the supplication of the Prophets was answered by beseeching in the names of the Imams, this is a false claim. The Prophets called upon Allah by His name, affirming His Oneness, may He be glorified. The prophet Ayyoob (ﷺ) beseeched Allah by His beautiful names, affirming that He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy:

﴾And [remember] Ayyoob [Job], when he cried to his Lord: 'Verily, distress has seized me, and You are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy.' So We answered his call, and We removed the distress that was on him, and We restored his family to him [that he had lost] and the like thereof along with them as a mercy from Ourselves and a Reminder for all those who worship Us.﴿

(Qur'an 21: 83-84)

Yoonus (Dhun-Noon) (ﷺ) beseeched Allah by His Oneness. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴾And [remember] Dhun-Noon [Jonah], when he went off in anger, and imagined that We shall not punish him [i.e. the calamities which had befallen him]! But he cried through the darkness [saying]: *Lâ ilâhâ illâ Anta* [none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah)], Glorified [and Exalted] be You [above all that (evil) they

associate with You]! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers." So We answered his call, and delivered him from the distress. And thus We do deliver the believers [who believe in the Oneness of Allah, abstain from evil and work righteousness].﴿ *(Qur'an 21: 87-88)*

Allah (ﷻ) described the words spoken by Adam (ﷺ) and his wife: ﴾They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.'﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 23)*

This idea of the Shia is known to be corrupt on the basis of Islamic teachings. The books of the Shia themselves narrate reports from the Imams that contradict this idea; they describe the Imams conversing with Allah (ﷻ) and calling upon Him. They narrated many reports, from every Imam without exception, describing how he called upon Allah (ﷻ) and conversed with Him. Most of these reports are narrated by al-Majlisi in *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*.[624]

3.4.3.c. Their belief that pilgrimage to their shrines is greater than pilgrimage to the House of Allah (ﷻ)

Ibn Taymiyah said: "Some people that I trust told me that among them are those who believe that pilgrimage to the shrines is greater than pilgrimage to the Ancient House (the Ka'bah), thus they think that associating others with Allah is greater than worshipping Allah alone. This is the greatest belief in falsehood."[625]

It says in *al-Kâfi* and elsewhere: "Visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn is equivalent to twenty hajj pilgrimages and better than twenty 'umrahs and hajj pilgrimages."[626] The fabricated Shiite reports ascribe a special virtue to visiting the tomb of al-Ḥusayn on the day of 'Arafah and say, "Whoever comes to al-Ḥusayn on a day other than Eid, recognising his status, Allah will record for him twenty hajj pilgrimages and twenty 'umrahs, blessed and accepted.

Whoever comes to him on the day of Eid, Allah will record for him twenty hajj pilgrimages and one hundred 'umrahs. Whoever comes to him on the day of 'Arafah, recognising his status, Allah will record for him one thousand hajj pilgrimages and one thousand 'umrahs, blessed and accepted, and one thousand campaigns with a Prophet who was sent or a just ruler."[627] For these people, visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn is not only better than hajj; it is the best of deeds. In their report, it says that visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn is the best possible deed.[628] According to another report, "One of the most beloved of deeds is visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn."[629]

Thus the laws and commandments of Islam are forgotten, and attention is paid to graves and tombs. They consider visits to these places the best of deeds, without any evidence apart from whatever their imaginations come up with or what is inspired from their satans, who have instituted for them a religion which Allah (ﷻ) has not ordained.[630]

These people regard visiting the tombs as one of the obligatory duties of their religion, for which they have invented rituals like those of the hajj pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah. Ibn Taymiyah said: "Their Shaykh Ibn an-Nu'mân, who is known to them as al-Mufeed, wrote a book which he called *Manâsik al-Mashâhid* (*The Rituals of the Shrines*). According to it, pilgrimage is performed at the graves of created beings as it is performed at the Ka'bah, the Sacred House that Allah has made an asylum of security and benefits (such as hajj and 'umrah) for mankind[631] and the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind;[632] no circumambulation is to be performed except around it, no prayers are to be offered in any direction except towards it, and no pilgrimage is enjoined except to it."[633] Anyone who looks at the references of the Râfiḍi Shia that speak of the shrines will see very strange deviations from the Book of Allah and the guidance of the Messenger (ﷺ). Anyone who wishes to

know more may refer to the book *Uṣool Madh-hab ash-Shia al-Imamiyyah.*[634]

The Muslims have one Ka'bah, which they face in their prayers and supplications, to which they go on pilgrimage and around which they circumambulate (perform ṭawâf); as for the Shia, they have the shrines of the dead Imams.[635] What they do at these shrines has been forbidden by Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, and everything that is forbidden by Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger is blameworthy and disallowed, whether the one who does it claims to be Sunni or Shiite. It is well known in the religion of Islam that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not enjoin the actions that they speak of with regard to shrines, and he did not prescribe for his Ummah any rituals to be performed at the graves of prophets and righteous people. That is the religion of the polytheists, of whom Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And they have said: 'You shall not leave your gods, nor shall you leave *Wadd,* nor *Suwâ',* nor *Yaghooth,* nor *Ya'ooq* nor *Nasr*' [these are the names of their idols].'﴿ *(Qur'an 71: 23)*

Ibn 'Abbâs and others said about those idols: "These are the names of righteous men among the people of Nooh (ﷺ). When they died, Satan inspired their people to set up idols in the places where they used to sit and to call them by their names. They did that, but the idols were not worshipped until those people died and knowledge was lost, then they were worshipped."[636] Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) said to Abu al-Hayâj al-Asadi: "Shall I not send you on the same mission as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me? 'Do not leave any image without erasing it or any built-up grave without levelling it.'"[637] Some of the Shiite reports affirmed the same meaning. Al-Kulayni narrated from Abu Abdullah that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me to Madinah and said: 'Do not leave any image without erasing it or any grave without levelling it.'"[638] It was narrated that Abu Abdullah

said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade praying on graves, sitting on them, or building structures over them."[639] It was also narrated that Abu Abdullah said: "Do not build structures over graves... for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) disliked that."[640] It was narrated from his forefathers that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade plastering over graves.[641]

Al-Ḥurr al-'Âmili claimed that this prohibition included every grave except the graves of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Imams (ﷺ), and that the prohibition meant only that it was disliked.[642] However, the general meaning of these reports is clear, as is the evidence for its being ḥarâm. Al-'Âmili has no evidence for his contention except the strangeness of the real-life practice of his group and the oddness of some of their reports. This oddness itself is proof of invalidity because it is contrary to the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger and the consensus of the Ummah, including Ahl al-Bayt. A warning against this was narrated from Ahl al-Bayt, because it is a means that leads to associating others with Allah. Moreover, the reason for this prohibition does not differentiate between one grave and another; in fact, the danger is greater with regard to the graves of the Imams because the likelihood of people going to extremes with regard to them is greater. Hence the cause of polytheism is exaggerating about the righteous.[643]

3.4.4. Their belief that the Imam forbids what he wants and allows what he wants

The Shia claim in their reports that: "Allah (ﷻ) created Muhammad, 'Ali and Fâṭimah, and they remained for a thousand years, then He (ﷻ) created all other things and made these three witnesses to their creation. He (ﷻ) enjoined His creation to be obedient to them and delegated the affairs of creation to them, so they permit what they want and forbid what they want."[644] Their shaykh

al-Majlisi interpreted this text as follows: "He enjoined (His creation) to be obedient to them; in other words, He made it obligatory and a duty for all things to obey them, even inanimate things such as the heavens and the earth, like the splitting of the moon, trees moving towards them, pebbles glorifying Allah (ﷻ) and innumerable other things. He delegated their affairs to them with regard to what is permitted and what is forbidden, what is given and what is withheld."[645] The Shia have reports that clearly state this, including those narrated by al-Mufeed in *al-Ikhtiṣâṣ*, al-Majlisi in *al-Biḥâr* and others, from Abu Ja'far who said: "If we permit something gained by someone from the wrongdoers,[646] it is ḥalâl, because the Imams are given authority." Therefore, what they permit is permitted, and what they forbid is forbidden.[647]

However, it is well known from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) that one of the foundations of tawḥeed is the belief that Allah (ﷻ) alone is the Lawgiver Who permits what He wills and forbids what He wills, and He has no partner or associate in that. The Messengers of Allah conveyed the laws of Allah to His slaves, and the one who claims that he has an Imam who permits what he wants and forbids what he wants is included in the words of Allah: ﴾Or have they partners with Allah [false gods] who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not ordained?﴿ *(Qur'an 42: 21)*

The right to legislate does not belong to anyone except the Lord of mankind, and the role of the Messengers is only to convey from Allah (ﷻ); they do not forbid or permit anything except what Allah (ﷻ) enjoins upon them and reveals to them. Allah (ﷻ) says, concerning the one who follows his leaders in what they permit and forbid, as opposed to the laws and rulings of Allah: ﴾They [Jews and Christians] took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah [by obeying them in things which they made lawful or

unlawful according to their own desires without being ordered by Allah]...》 *(Qur'an 9: 31)* Allah (ﷻ) describes their following them in what they permit of ḥarâm things and what they forbid of ḥalâl things [as is mentioned in the commentary on this verse] as being a kind of worship of them because the followers received instruction on what is permitted and what is forbidden on their authority, but this is something that can only be received from Allah (ﷻ).[648]

3.4.5. Their belief that this world and the hereafter are for the Imam to deal with as he wants

The author of *al-Kâfi* devoted a chapter to this topic entitled "The entire earth belongs to the Imam,"[649] in which it is narrated from Abu Buṣayr that Abu Abdullah (ﷺ) said: "Do you not know that this world belongs to the Imam, to deal with as he wishes and to give to whom he wishes? That is allowed for him by Allah."[650]

This text is polytheism, associating partners with Allah in His Lordship, because Allah (ﷻ) says: 《Know you not that it is Allah to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth?》 *(Qur'an 2: 107)*

《And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them; and to Him is the return [of all]》 *(Qur'an 5: 18)*

《To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is therein》 *(Qur'an 5: 120)*

《He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Who has begotten no son [children or offspring] and for Whom there is no partner in the dominion.》 *(Qur'an 25: 2)*

《But to Allah belongs the last [hereafter] and the first [the world].》 *(Qur'an 53: 25)*

﴾Say [O Muhammad to polytheists, pagans]: Who gives you provision from the heavens and the earth?﴿ *(Qur'an 34: 24)*

﴾So seek your provision from Allah [Alone], and worship Him [Alone], and be grateful to Him.﴿ *(Qur'an 29: 17)*

So Allah is unique in His dominion, provision and control, and He has no partner in that.[651]

3.4.6. Their belief that natural phenomena can be attributed to the Imams

It was narrated that Samâ'ah ibn Mahrân said: "I was with Abu Abdullah, and there was thunder and lightning. Abu Abdullah said: 'Whatever happens of thunder and lightning, it is because of the command of your companion.' I said: 'Who is our companion?' He said: 'Amir al-Mu'mineen.'"[652] What he meant was that every time there is thunder and lightning, it is by the command of 'Ali (ﷺ), not by the command of Allah (ﷻ), the One, the Almighty. What could a fair-minded Muslim conclude from this report, when Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾It is He Who shows you the lightning, as a fear [for travellers] and as a hope [for those who wait for rain]. And it is He Who brings up [or originates] the clouds, heavy [with water]﴿ *(Qur'an 13: 12)*? Is this not Saba'i thought raising its ugly head in the books of the Twelvers? Is this not a claim of divinity for 'Ali (ﷺ), or at least a claim that he has a share in divinity? How dare al-Majlisi, and al-Mufeed before him, write such myths and attribute them to Ja'far?

The implications of this report cannot be unknown to people like them, because no one believes in this or promotes it except a heretic and one who has gone astray. It is very strange that people base their religion on books which contain this garbage and venerate shaykhs who openly preach this heresy. Is there no one among this group who has reason and piety and who will denounce openly and

loudly all this widespread misguidance and blatant disbelief, clear the name of the pure Ahl al-Bayt of this lethal nonsense, and purify Shiism of this stain of disbelief and misguidance caused by the shaykhs of the Safavid state? Or is it the case that whenever a sincere voice speaks up, they either hasten to kill him, as they did with al-Kisrawi, or they interpret his words as being taqiyyah, as they did with many of their reports and words of their shaykhs? Is it now a hopeless case to call the people of this madh-hab to the light of truth?[653]

3.4.7. Their belief that part of the divine is incarnated in the Imams

The Imami Shia have some reports claiming that part of the divine light was incarnated in 'Ali.[654] Abu Abdullah supposedly said: "Then he touched us with his right hand, and his light entered us,[655] but Allah mixed us with His Essence."[656] They claim that the Imams were given absolute power by means of this part of the divine that is in them. The one who reads about what they call 'the miracles of the Imams,' of which there are hundreds of reports, will notice that the Imams became like the Lord of the Worlds — may He be exalted and sanctified above what they say — in terms of giving life and death, creation and granting provision.[657] Their reports may add a comment stating that this was from Allah (ﷻ), by way of deceit. To prove that this idea is corrupt, it is sufficient just to try to comprehend it because it is contrary to the texts, to reason and to the natural laws of the universe. It can also be proven wrong by the real lives and statements of the Imams. For one thing, the Shia claim that the Imams were wronged and persecuted during their lives. For another, the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ) said, as his Lord commanded him: ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: 'I possess no power over benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills.'﴾ *(Qur'an 7: 188)*

What is amazing is that the books of the Shia, even though they exaggerate about the Imams, also narrate things that are contrary, which illustrates the contradictions in what they preach, as is the norm in all lies and falsehood. In *Rijâl al-Kashshi*, it says that Ja'far ibn Muhammad said: "By Allah, we are no more than slaves of the One who created us and chose us, and we cannot cause any harm or bring any benefit. If He shows mercy towards us, it is because He is Merciful, and if He punishes us, it is because of our sins. By Allah, we have no plea before Allah, and we have no proof that Allah will let us off. We will die and be buried and be resurrected; we will be made to stand before Him, and we will be questioned. Woe to them, what is wrong with them? May Allah curse them, for they have offended Allah (ﷻ) and offended His Messenger (ﷺ) in his grave, as well as Amir al-Mu'mineen ['Ali], Fâṭimah, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, 'Ali ibn al-Ḥasan and Muhammad ibn 'Ali (may the blessings of Allah be upon them). Bear witness that I am a man descended from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but I have no proof that Allah will let me off. If I obey Him, He will have mercy on me and if I disobey Him, He will punish me severely."[658]

The Shiite shaykhs rationalise such statements by describing them as examples of taqiyyah. They have led people astray from the straight path, and the Shiite madh-hab has become the madh-hab of the shaykhs (mullahs), not the madh-hab of the Imams.[659]

3.4.8. Their belief that the Imams know what has happened and what will happen, and that nothing is hidden from them

The author of *al-Kâfi* wrote a chapter on this topic entitled: "The Imams know what has happened and what will happen, and nothing is hidden from them,"[660] in which he narrated a number of reports. He wrote another chapter entitled "If the Imams want to

know, they will know,"[661] in which he quoted a number of their hadiths. One of the reports concerning these matters falsely claims:[662] "Abu Abdullah said: 'I know what is in the heavens and what is on earth, I know what is in paradise and what is in hell, and I know what has happened and what will happen.'"[663] It was narrated that Sayf at-Tammâr said: "A group of Shia were with Abu Abdullah (ﷺ) in al-Ḥijr, and he said: 'Is there any spy among us?' We looked right and left and did not see anyone, so we said: 'There is no one watching us.' He said: 'By the Lord of the Ka'bah' — three times — 'if I were standing between Moosa and al-Khiḍr, I would tell them that I have more knowledge than them, and I would tell them about that of which they had no knowledge, for Moosa and al-Khiḍr (peace be upon them) were given knowledge of what had happened, but they were not given knowledge of what is to come until the Hour begins. However, we inherited a legacy from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his family.'"[664]

These are some examples of the exaggeration of the Râfiḍi Shia and some of their reports. Exaggeration is the foundation and origin of their madh-hab, but Allah (ﷻ) has forbidden and warned against exaggeration because it is contrary to tawḥeed and forms the basis of polytheism, in the past and the present. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Exceed not the limits in your religion [by believing in something] other than the truth﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 77)*. Ibn Katheer said, commenting on this verse: "[This means] do not overstep the mark in following the truth. Do not exaggerate in praising the one whom I instruct you to respect, to the extent that you go to extremes and elevate him from prophethood to divinity as they did with the Messiah; he was one of the Prophets, but they made him a god alongside Allah (ﷻ). That happened because of following in the footsteps of leaders and shaykhs who are leaders of misguidance, your predecessors who went astray before you. ﴾[They] went astray before and misled many, and strayed [themselves] from the Right Path﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 77)*. In other

words, they drifted away from the path of righteousness and moderation and followed the way of whims and desires and misguidance."[665]

Allah (ﷻ) also says: ﴾O people of the Scripture [Christians]! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, nor say of Allah aught but the truth﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 171).* In these two verses, Allah (ﷻ) forbids going to extremes and going beyond due limits by overstating praise. This is a clear refutation of the Râfiḍi Shia and all those who follow this path with regard to one whom they venerate. Allah (ﷻ) instructed His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to explain to the people that he had no control over his affairs, that benefit and harm are in the hand of Allah (ﷻ), and that no one has knowledge of the unseen except Allah (ﷻ), Who instructed him:

﴾Say [O Muhammad]: 'I don't tell you that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor [that] I know the Unseen; nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me.' Say: 'Are the blind and the one who sees equal? Will you not then take thought?'﴿ *(Qur'an 6: 50)*

﴾Say [O Muhammad]: 'I possess no power over benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills. If I had the knowledge of the *Ghayb* [Unseen], I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe.'﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 188)*

Thus Allah (ﷻ) commanded him to delegate his affairs to Him (ﷻ) and to tell the people that he had no knowledge of the unseen, the future or anything of that nature.[666] All of this deters the ways that may lead to exaggeration about him (ﷺ). It is a warning to his Ummah lest they exaggerate about him as the Jews and Christians exaggerated about their Prophets. If this is the case with regard to the leader of mankind and the greatest in status before Allah (ﷻ), it is even more appropriate with regard to others.

This highlights the falseness of the Râfiḍi claims about the Imams and especially their belief that they have knowledge of the unseen and that they know what has happened and what will happen. They make them partners with Allah in creation and giving life, and in names and attributes. How can they say that when Allah (ﷻ) says in His noble Book: ﴾No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die.﴿ *(Qur'an 31: 34)*

﴾On the Day when Allah will gather the Messengers together and say to them: 'What was the response you received [from men to your teaching]?' They will say: 'We have no knowledge, verily, only You are the All-Knower of all that is hidden [or unseen]'﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 109)*

﴾Allah knows what every female bears, and by how much the wombs fall short [of their time or number] or exceed.﴿ *(Qur'an 13: 8)*

﴾That is because Allah, He is the Truth, and it is He Who gives life to the dead.﴿ *(Qur'an 22: 6)*

﴾And with Him are the keys of the *Ghayb* [all that is hidden], none knows them but He.﴿ *(Qur'an 6: 59)*

﴾And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Allah has power over all things.﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 189)*

﴾Blessed be He in Whose Hand is the dominion; and He is Able to do all things.﴿ *(Qur'an 67: 1)*

There are other similar verses confirming that He alone has knowledge of the unseen and control over the universe. Whoever attributes any of that to created beings has fallen into polytheism by setting up rivals to Allah (ﷻ) in His Lordship and Divinity. How can he claim to be a Muslim when that is the case? Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him [in worship], but He forgives except that [anything else] to whom He wills.﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 48)*

﴾Verily, whosoever sets up partners [in worship] with Allah, then Allah has forbidden paradise to him, and the fire will be his abode. And for the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers] there are no helpers.﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 72)*

That is because Allah (ﷻ) created mankind to worship Him and to affirm His Oneness, as He says: ﴾And I [Allah] created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me [Alone].﴿ *(Qur'an 51: 56)*

He (ﷻ) also sent the Messengers and revealed the Books so that He alone might be worshipped. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* [community, nation] a Messenger [proclaiming]: 'Worship Allah [Alone], and avoid [or keep away from] *Ṭâghoot* [all false deities, i.e. do not worship *Ṭâghoot* besides Allah].'﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 36)*

So exaggeration is contrary to the true concept of worship.[667] Just as Allah (ﷻ) warned against exaggeration in all forms, the Prophet (ﷺ) also warned against it so as to protect tawḥeed, or belief in the Oneness of Allah, and to block all means that lead to the undermining of tawḥeed because exaggeration leads to polytheism, and it never spreads in a nation without causing its doom. The Prophet (ﷺ) warned his Ummah against this disease: "O people, beware of exaggeration in religious matters, for those who came before you were doomed because of exaggeration in religious matters."[668] It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) that he heard 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) say on the minbar: "I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: 'Do not praise me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam. I am no more than a slave, so say "the slave of Allah and His Messenger".'"[669] The Prophet (ﷺ) warned his Ummah against exaggerating and overstepping the mark in praising him as the Christians did with regard to 'Eesa (عليه السلام). He (ﷺ) instructed that he should be described as a slave as Allah described him: ﴾Glorified be He [Allah] Who took

His slave [Muhammad] for a journey by night﴿ *(Qur'an 17: 1)*. Allah (ﷻ) described him in this manner in the context of calling [the jinn] to Him: ﴾And when the slave of Allah [Muhammad] stood up invoking Him [his Lord — Allah] in prayer they [the jinn] just made round him a dense crowd as if sticking one over the other [in order to listen to the Prophet's recitation]﴿ *(Qur'an 72: 19)*. He also described him this way in the context of sending down the Book to him and the descent of the Angel to him. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion [of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'an] to His slave [Muhammad]﴿ *(Qur'an 25: 1)*. These three scenarios reflect the highest status, but his Lord (ﷻ) described him in each case as His slave. Where do the Râfiḍi Shia stand with regard to these verses and hadiths that forbid and warn against going to extremes and that call for attaining true servitude to Allah?

Those who study the words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and his sons (may Allah be pleased with them) will find the clearest refutation of this extremism and exaggeration and will see that they have nothing to do with the views of the Râfiḍi Shia and all those who exaggerated about them. They will also see that those reports that are attributed to them are lies and misguidance.[670] Imam Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl 'Âmir ibn Wâthilah (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib when a man came to him and said: 'What did the Prophet (ﷺ) tell you in secret?' He got angry and said: 'The Prophet (ﷺ) did not tell me anything in secret that he hid from the people, but he told me four things.' The man said: 'What are they, O Amir al-Mu'mineen?' 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'May Allah curse the one who curses his father, may Allah curse the one who offers a sacrifice to anything other than Allah, may Allah curse the one who gives refuge to an innovator, and may Allah curse the one who changes the boundary markers.'" According to another report, the man said: "Did the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) tell you anything that was for you only?" 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) replied: "The

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not tell us anything that was for us only."[671]

According to a report narrated by Imam Aḥmad, 'Ali said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not tell me anything in exclusion to other people."[672] Bukhari narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Abu Juḥayfah (ﷺ) said: "I said to 'Ali: 'Do you have a document?' He said: 'No, except the Book of Allah or subtle understanding that a Muslim man may be given, or what is in this document.' I said: 'What is in this document?' He said: 'Compensation for death or injury, and ransom of captives, and that no Muslim should be killed in retaliation for a non-Muslim.'"[673] According to another report, 'Ali was asked: "Do you have anything of the revelation apart from the Book of Allah?" He said: "No, by the One Who split the seed and created the soul, I do not know of anything except understanding that Allah may bestow upon some."[674]

Ibn Ḥajar said: "Abu Juḥayfah only asked him about that because some of the Shia were claiming that Ahl al-Bayt — and especially 'Ali — knew some things that had been revealed that the Prophet (ﷺ) had told only to them and not to anyone else."[675] Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after quoting this hadith: "The documents that are attributed to 'Ali or others of Ahl al-Bayt in reports that speak of the future are all lies, such as the document *al-Jifr wal-Biṭâqah* and others. The same applies to the claim that 'Ali had knowledge that the Prophet (ﷺ) taught to him only, to the exclusion of the other Companions, and to the reports narrated from other Companions saying that the Prophet (ﷺ) singled him out for teaching esoteric, hidden knowledge of Islam. All of that is false."[676]

What proves the falseness of these claims is the report narrated by Ibn Sa'd from 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-'Âbideen, who said about Sa'eed ibn Jubayr (ﷺ): "This man used to come to us, and we would ask him about the shares of inheritance and other things by

means of which Allah (ﷻ) would benefit us. We do not have what these people say we do — and he pointed towards Iraq."[677] It was also narrated that Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah warned the Râfiḍi Shia about what they were attributing to him of having special knowledge that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had taught only to Ahl al-Bayt. He said: "By Allah, we did not inherit anything from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) except what is between the two covers (meaning the Qur'an)."[678]

It is narrated in mutawâtir reports from Ahl al-Bayt that they used to say to their supporters: "O people, love us in accordance with the teachings of Islam, because the way you love us has gone so far that it shames us."[679] Moreover, in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia themselves, there is a warning against going to extremes and a rejection of that by Ahl al-Bayt. Al-Majlisi narrated, with his chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه), that 'Ali said: "Beware of exaggerating about us; say that we are slaves under the dominion of our Lord."[680] It was also narrated from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) that he said: "O Allah, I renounce those who exaggerate about me just as 'Eesa ibn Maryam renounced the Christians. O Allah, humiliate them forever and do not support any of them."[681]

Al-Kulayni narrated, with his chain of narration from Sadeed, that he said: "Abu Buṣayr, Yaḥya al-Bazzâr, Dâwood ibn Katheer and I were in the gathering of Abu Abdullah when he came out to us in a state of anger. When he took his place in the gathering, he said: 'I am astounded by people who claim that we have knowledge of the unseen. No one has knowledge of the unseen except Allah (ﷻ). I wanted to hit my slave woman, so-and-so; she ran away, and I did not know in which room of the house she was.'"[682] Al-Kashshi narrated that Abu Buṣayr said: "I said to Abu Abdullah (رحمه الله): 'They are saying...' He said: 'What are they saying?' I said: 'They are saying that you know the raindrops, the number of the stars, the leaves on

the trees, the weight of what is in the sea and the number of particles of soil.' He raised his hand towards the sky and said: 'Glory be to Allah. No, by Allah, no one knows that except Allah.'"[683]

These are the words of the pure Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, as stated in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia themselves; they are innocent of what the Râfiḍi Shia claim, because the Râfiḍis are among the most untruthful of Allah's creation. Hypocrisy and telling lies are part of their religion. Ibn Taymiyah said that they are among the most mendacious of people with regard to transmitting reports and among the most ignorant of people with regard to reason.[684]

Thus the Shia are exposed by their own reports, which contradict one another. The reports in which the Imams say that they are the source of provision and rain and so on, which are narrated by the shaykhs of the Twelvers, are left over from the extreme Shias whose views the Imams themselves denounced. According to their reports: "When it was said to Abu Abdullah: 'Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar is saying that you determine people's provision,' Abu Abdullah said: 'By Allah, no one determines our provision except Allah. I needed food for my family, and I was worried; I thought about it so much that it dominated my thoughts until I managed to earn some food for them, then I was able to relax. May Allah curse and disavow the one who says that.'"[685]

Nonetheless, these reports are like a white hair on a black bull. Taqiyyah may be used to interpret any report when the Shiite shaykhs are not happy with its meaning. For example, listen to what the commentator on *al-Kâfi* has to say about the words of Abu Abdullah quoted above, when he stated that he was astounded by people who attributed knowledge of the unseen to him, and he refuted that by saying that his slave woman disappeared and he did not even know where she was, so how could it be said of him that he had knowledge of the unseen? The commentator on *al-Kâfi* said: "The aim of

expressing his astonishment openly was so that the ignorant would not take him as a god, or to prove to some of the people who were present there and did not recognise his virtue that what was attributed to him of knowledge of the unseen was not true, so as to protect himself. However, he had knowledge of what had happened and what would happen, so how could he not know where his slave woman was? If you say that his saying this implies that he was telling a lie, I say: It is a lie if he did not intend it to be ambiguous, but he did intend it to be ambiguous, and what he meant was: I do not have any knowledge that did not come to me from Allah that she was in any particular room in the house."[686]

Look at this amazing long-winded effort to refute this report and to prove that the Imam knows what has happened in the past and what will happen in the future! In order to prove that, he accuses the Imam of telling lies, thus demolishing one of their basic principles, namely infallibility.[687]

Another of their shaykhs, ash-Sha'râni, who commented on this explanation by the author of *al-Kâfi*, did not like this long-winded way of interpreting the report, so he decided to reject it in the shortest manner by ruling that this report was a lie. They spread false rumours like these about the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt, then when members of Ahl al-Bayt rejected the fabrications of these liars and exposed their falsehood before the people, the Shiite scholars interpreted this rejection and denunciation as being taqiyyah. This became a trick used by the extreme Shia to keep Shiism within the circle of extremism, reject the truth and undermine Ahl al-Bayt.[688] Zurârah ibn A'yun claimed that Ja'far ibn Muhammad knew the people of paradise and the people of hell; when Ja'far heard that, he denied it and denounced the one who said it as a disbeliever. Someone told Zurârah about Ja'far's attitude, and he said: "He used taqiyyah with you!"[689]

3.4.9. Their exaggeration in believing that Allah (ﷻ) has a physical shape

The misguided belief that Allah (ﷻ) has a physical shape was well known among the Jews, but the first to introduce it among the Muslims were the Râfiḍi Shia. Ar-Râzi said: "Most of the Jews liken Allah to His creation in physical terms. This belief among Muslims first began with the Râfiḍis such as Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam, Hishâm ibn Sâlim al-Jawâleeqi, Yoonus ibn 'Abd ur-Raḥmân al-Qummi and Abu Ja'far al-Aḥwal."[690]

All of these men are regarded by the Twelvers as being pioneers among their shaykhs and trustworthy in transmitting their madh-hab.[691] Ibn Taymiyah identified the first one who fabricated this idea, saying: "The first one in Islam who is known to have said that Allah has a physical shape was Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam."[692] Those who study different sects narrated from him and his followers extreme statements, which would make the believers' skin crawl if they were to hear them. 'Abdul-Qâhir al-Baghdâdi said: "Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam claimed that his god was a physical being with limits to his physical being, that he was tall and wide and deep, and that he was as tall as he was wide."[693] There are very many reports narrated from Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam and his followers about extreme views on the belief that Allah has a physical shape; these are narrated in the books on sects and elsewhere.[694]

Likening Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty, to His creation is a belief that existed among the Jews and leaked into Shiism. The first one to propagate this idea was Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam, and he influenced others who are known in the books on sects as misguided, extreme madh-habs belonging to the Twelvers.[695] The shaykhs of the Twelvers defended these people despite abundant reports of their misguided notions. Their evil became widespread, and they went to extremes to find an acceptable way to interpret every notorious

statement attributed to them, or they said it was a fabrication.[696]

It is mentioned in a number of their reports that Hisham ibn al-Ḥakam and Hishâm ibn Sâlim al-Jawâleeqi played a role in spreading the idea among the Shia that Allah has a physical shape,[697] but the Imams rejected them and their statements. When one of the Shia came to their Imam and told him that he followed the view of Hishâm, their Imam Abu al-Ḥasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad said: "What do you have to do with the view of Hishâm? The one who claims that Allah has a physical shape is not one of us, and we have nothing to do with him in this world and in the hereafter."[698]

Some of their reports mention what they say about Allah (ﷻ). In one, someone[699] told Abu Abdullah what one group of Shia believed about Allah having a physical shape. "He said: 'Some of our companions claim that Allah has an image like that of man.' Another one said that He 'has the image of a beardless man with very curly hair.' Abu Abdullah fell down in prostration, then he raised his head and said: 'Glory be to the One like Whom there is nothing. No vision can grasp Him, and no knowledge can encompass Him.'"[700]

Their senior scholars went to extremes in understanding the attributes of Allah (ﷻ) literally, to the extent that they likened Him to His creation. This constitutes disbelief in Allah (ﷻ) because it is a rejection of the verse in which He (ﷻ) says, ﴾There is nothing like Him﴿ *(Qur'an 42: 11)*. They rejected the attributes that are befitting to Him and ascribed to Him attributes other than those He ascribed to Himself. They have many reports of this nature.[701]

This trend towards extremism in understanding the divine attributes literally (by interpreting them as being like the attributes of man) is different from affirming the attributes of Allah (ﷻ) and understanding them in an appropriate way, which is the way of the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt. The Shiite madh-hab split into two

competing groups: a group led by Hishâm, which believed that Allah has a physical shape, and a group that believed that Allah is above being similar to His creation. The latter is the view of Ahl al-Bayt, as indicated by the reports of the Shia themselves, as is proven and widely documented in the books of the scholars.[702]

3.4.10. Their denial of the divine attributes

After this going to extremes in interpreting the divine attributes in a literal sense (likening Allah to His creation), the madh-hab began to change at the end of the third century AH, when it was influenced by Mutazilite ideas denying some attributes of the Creator (ﷻ) that are affirmed in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The trend towards this denial became stronger in the fourth century AH, when al-Mufeed and his followers like al-Moosawi (who is known as ash-Shareef ar-Raḍiy and Abu Ja'far aṭ-Ṭoosi) began to write books based on the books of the Mutazilites.[703] Much of what they wrote was copied line by line from the commentary of the Mutazilites, such as what they said when interpreting verses of the Qur'an that speak of the divine attributes, the divine will and decree and so on.[704] The one who reads the books of the later Shia can hardly see any difference between these books and the books of the Mutazilites on the topic of the divine names and attributes because they claim that reason is their foundation with regard to what they believe concerning these issues. The beliefs of the Mutazilites in this regard were adopted by the later Shiite shaykhs, including the issue of the Qur'an being created, the idea that the believers will not see their Lord in the hereafter, and denial of the divine attributes. Moreover, the specious arguments that the Mutazilites developed are the same as those offered by the later Shiite shaykhs.

What is different in the Shia books is that the reports denying the divine attributes are attributed to the Imams. They came up with

numerous reports about the Imams to support this view. They fabricated false reports, which they attributed to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) and some of the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt such as Muhammad al-Bâqir and Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, claiming that they denied the divine attributes. Some of their contemporary shaykhs regard this as their basis for denying the divine attributes; one of them wrote under the title *Tareeqat Ma'rifat aṣ-Ṣifât* (How to know the divine attributes): "Is there any room for further discussion of the divine attributes? Is there any way other than to submit to the word of Amir al-Mu'mineen: 'The highest level of sincerity is to deny that He has any attributes'?"[705]

In fact, what is proven from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) and the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt is that they affirmed the divine attributes, and the reports concerning that are numerous and well proven in the books of the scholars.[706] This is also admitted in some reports that exist among the huge accumulation of reports that speak of denying the divine attributes. A number of their own reports describe the Lord of the Worlds in negative terms, denying that these are attributes of Allah (ﷻ). This is nothing new, because this is the way of those who are misguided and have drifted away from the path of the Messengers, such as the philosophers, the Mutazilites and others.

Allah (ﷻ) sent His Messengers to affirm His attributes in detail and to deny certain things in general terms. The divine attributes are affirmed in detail in the Book of Allah, and other things are denied in general terms.[707] Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer﴾ *(Qur'an 42: 11)*. The denial comes in general terms: "There is nothing like Him." This is the usual way of the Qur'an in denying. Allah says: ﴿Do you know of any who is similar to Him?﴾ *(Qur'an 19: 65)* This means: do you know of any who is like Him, who deserves a name like His? It was also

said that it means: Do you know any competitor who could compete with Him?[708] This is the meaning of the report narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs: "Do you know of any who is like or similar to Him?"[709] Allah (ﷻ) also says: ﴾And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.﴿ *(Qur'an 112: 4)* With regard to the affirmation of the divine attributes, this appears in detail: ﴾and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.﴿ *(Qur'an 42: 11)*

At the end of Soorat al-Ḥashr, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾He is Allah, beside Whom *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* [none has the right to be worshipped but He] the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. He is Allah, beside Whom *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* [none has the right to be worshipped but He], the King, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah! [High is He] above all that they associate as partners with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.﴿ *(Qur'an 59: 22-24)*

There are many other similar verses as well.[710]

The Shia narrate from their Imams that the Creator cannot be described except in the way He described Himself.[711] However, the Shia turned away from that just as they turned away from the Book of Allah and from the dictates of reason and common sense, preferring instead the route of mere imitation and picking up the garbage of extinct philosophies. How can any rational person dare to rely — with regard to a matter of the unseen, which there is no way to know in detail except by means of divine texts — on limited rational discussions and flawed ideas, and to refer concerning these issues to the contradictory imagination of human beings and their conflicting concepts?[712]

3.4.10.a. The issue of the Qur'an being created

The Qur'an is the word of Allah that was revealed, not created. This is what is indicated by the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the consensus of the early generation,[713] but the Twelvers followed in the footsteps of the Mutazilites with regard to the idea that the Qur'an is created. Al-Majlisi, the Shaykh of the Shia, wrote a chapter in *Biḥâr al-Anwâr* entitled: "The Qur'an is created."[714] In this chapter, he narrated eleven reports; most of them are contrary to what he said, but the shaykhs have their own way of interpreting them, which we will discuss shortly. The Shiite scholar Muḥsin al-Ameen said: "The Shia and the Mutazilites said: 'The Qur'an is created.'"[715] This is based on their denial of the divine attribute of speech and their claim that Allah (ﷻ) created speech in some of His creation, such as the bush when He spoke to Moosa, and Jibreel when He sent down the Qur'an.[716] We have quoted above some of what their shaykhs said about this matter.[717]

If you refer to the reports that they narrated from Ahl al-Bayt, you will find that most of them differ from the view of the Shia on this issue. For example, in *Tafseer al-'Ayyâshi*, it is narrated from ar-Riḍa that he was asked about the Qur'an, and he said: "It is the word of Allah and is not created."[718] In *at-Tawḥeed* by Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi, it is recorded that it was said to Abu al-Ḥasan Moosa (ﷺ): "O son of the Messenger of Allah, what do you say about Qur'an? Those who came before differed concerning it; some people say that it is created, and some say that it is not created." He (ﷺ) said: "As for me, I do not say what they say; instead I say that it is the word of Allah (ﷻ)."[719]

They have many similar reports,[720] but it may be noted that the Shaykh of the Shia during his lifetime, Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi, went in the opposite direction in interpreting these texts. He affirmed that the view of the Imams was: "Saying that the Qur'an is not

created means that it is not a lie (or not made-up), but it does not mean that it is not created (or not brought into being)."[721] He also said: "The reason why we refrain from using the word 'created' (*makhlooq*) is that it could mean false, as in the phrase *kalâm makhlooq makdhoob* (false, made-up words)."[722]

However, the scholars of the pious predecessors, the earliest generations of the righteous followers of Islam, refuted them, saying: "When we say that it is not created, we do not mean thereby that it is not fabricated; suggesting that it is fabricated is blatant disbelief, as any Muslim knows. In fact, the issue here is that they said that it is created in a true sense, and the pious predecessors refuted this view. This is mentioned in many reports narrated from them, and they wrote many books about that."[723]

In *Tafseer as-Sirâṭ al-Mustaqeem*, by the Shiite scholar al-Buroojoordi, a text is quoted from Ibn Bâbawayh in which he interpreted the reports stating that the Qur'an is not created as being taqiyyah. He said: "The reason for the Imam not describing the Qur'an as created is either because of taqiyyah and going along with the people, or it is because saying it is created may be thought to indicate another meaning which was used by the disbelievers when they said: ﴾This is nothing but an invention!﴿ *(Qur'an 38: 7)*"[724] These shaykhs could not find any other explanation to turn to except suggesting that it was taqiyyah and the like.

This method proves that they have no foundation for anything they say. The possibility of taqiyyah in every text has led to great confusion and caused the essence of their madh-hab to be lost, so their religion has become a religion based on the views of al-Majlisi, al-Kulayni or Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi, not on the reports of the Imams.[725] Thus knowledge and truth were lost because of this crafty method, and the Ummah will remain in a state of division and dispute because of these methods, which are inspired by Satan with his plots.

If any of their shaykhs wants to do a favour to the Shia and guide them, he should lead them to the way of the main body of Muslims. He should take from their reports what is in accordance with the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), and the way of the noble Companions and scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, and he should get rid of the devious ideas of al-Qummi, al-Kulayni and al-Majlisi. The Imams themselves complained about many people fabricating lies about them, to the extent that they said: "The people are fond of telling lies about us."[726]

If you want to apply this method of finding the reports of Ahl as-Sunnah that are in harmony with reports of the Shia from Ahl al-Bayt concerning this issue, you will find that the books of the Shia include (as we have seen above) reports from Ahl al-Bayt stating that the Word of Allah was revealed, not created, and the books of Ahl as-Sunnah say the same thing. It was narrated by Bukhari in *Kitâb Af'âl al-'Ibâd,*[727] Ibn Abi Ḥâtim,[728] Abu Sa'eed ad-Dârimi, al-Âjurri in *Ash-Sharee'ah,*[729] al-Bayhaqi in *Al-I'tiqâd*[730] and in *Al-Asma' waṣ-Ṣifât,*[731] al-Lâlkâ'i in *Sharḥ Uṣool I'tiqâd Ahl as-Sunnah*[732] and Abu Dâwood in *Masâ'il al-Imam Aḥmad*[733] that Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq said, when he was asked about the Qur'an: "It is neither a creator nor created." Ibn Taymiyah said: "There are abundant reports to that effect from Ja'far."[734]

So why not adopt the reports that are common to both Sunnis and Shia, forsaking the falsehood that has nothing to support it except the views of shaykhs who want to cause division and disputes in the Ummah? These shaykhs strive to be odd and to isolate their groups so that they will have the opportunity to accumulate huge amounts of money in the name of the one-fifth, to attain social status, and to be regarded as 'holy men' on the basis of being the deputies of the hidden Imam. For these reasons, they persisted in confirming the view that "Whatever is different from the masses is a sign of guidance",[735] referring thereby to Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah.

The reports narrated in the books of the Shia that state that the Qur'an was revealed, not created, represent the views of the earliest Shia[736] because the idea that the Qur'an is created is the innovation of the later Shia.[737] The belief that the Qur'an is revealed, not created, is what is proven from Ahl al-Bayt. No one among the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, such as 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, Abu Ja'far al-Bâqir and his son Ja'far ibn Muhammad, suggested that the Qur'an was created, but the Imami Shia went against Ahl al-Bayt in this as in the majority of their fundamental beliefs.[738] Is it not sufficient, to highlight the corruption of their madh-hab, to note that it is contrary to what Ahl al-Bayt believed and contrary to their reports that are agreement with reports of Ahl as-Sunnah, and that all their reports are contradictory?[739]

The belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah with regard to this issue is that the Qur'an is the word of Allah (ﷻ) and that it came from Him, without discussing how, in the form of words. It came down to His Messenger as revelation, and the believers believed in it and were certain that it was the word of Allah (ﷻ) in a true sense, not something created like the words of people. Whoever hears it and claims that it is the word of a human being has committed an act of disbelief and is condemned by Allah and promised hell. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾I will cast him into hellfire﴿ *(Qur'an 74: 26)*. Allah has promised hell to those who say: ﴾This is nothing but the word of a human being!﴿ *(Qur'an 74: 25)* Therefore we know for certain that it is the word of the Creator of mankind and is not like human speech.[740]

3.4.10.b. The issue of seeing Allah (ﷻ)

The Imami Shia, because of their agreement with the Mutazilites, say that Allah (ﷻ) will not be seen. They narrated numerous reports, which were mentioned by Ibn Bâbawayh in his book *At-Tawḥeed* and most of which were also compiled by the author of *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, denying what is mentioned in the texts about the believers seeing their Lord in the hereafter.

For example, they fabricated a report saying that Abu Abdullah Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq was asked about Allah (ﷻ): "Will He be seen in the hereafter?" and he replied: "Glorified and exalted be He far above that; vision can only grasp that which has colour and shape, and Allah is the Creator of colours and shapes."[741] Their shaykh and 'Ayatollah' Ja'far an-Najafi, the author of *Kashf al-Ghaṭa'*, said: "If someone ascribes some attributes to Allah, such as saying that He could be seen, he is to be regarded as an apostate."[742] Al-Ḥurr al-'Âmili regarded denying that the believers will see Allah as one of the fundamentals of the Imams; he wrote a chapter entitled "No eye can see Allah, and no vision can encompass Him in this world or in the hereafter."[743]

Their denial that the believers will see their Lord in the hereafter is contrary to what is stated in the Sharia text and is also contrary to the madh-hab of Ahl al-Bayt, as some of their reports admit. Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi narrated from Abu Buṣayr that he said to Abu Abdullah: "Tell me about Allah, may He be glorified and exalted: will the believers see Him on the Day of Resurrection?" He said: "Yes, seeing [Allah] is the right of the people of paradise, who will see Him without encompassing Him and without knowing how, as it says in the Book of our Lord, such as the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Some faces that Day shall be Nâdirah [shining and radiant]. Looking at their Lord [Allah]﴿ *(Qur'an 75: 22-23)* and ﴾There they will have all that they desire — and We have more [for them, i.e. a glance at the All-Mighty, All-Majestic]﴿ *(Qur'an 50: 35).* Anas ibn Mâlik (ﷺ) said: 'This means looking upon the countenance of Allah (ﷻ).'"[744]

Allah (ﷻ) also says: ﴾For those who have done good is the best reward and even more [i.e. having the honour of glancing at the countenance of Allah]﴿ *(Qur'an 10: 26).* The 'best reward' is paradise, and 'even more' is gazing upon His noble countenance. It was

explained in this way by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the Companions after him. Muslim narrated in his *Şaheeḥ* that Şuhayb said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) recited the verse, ﴾For those who have done good is the best reward and even more [i.e. having the honour of glancing at the countenance of Allah]﴿ *(Qur'an 10: 26)*, then he said: "When the people of paradise have entered paradise, Allah (ﷻ) will say: 'Do you want anything more?' They will say: 'Have You not brightened our faces and admitted us to paradise and saved us from the fire?' Then He will remove the veil, and they will not be given anything that is dearer to them than gazing upon their Lord (ﷻ)."[745]

And Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Nay! Surely, they [evil doers] will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day.﴿ *(Qur'an 83: 15)*

Ash-Shâfa'i and other scholars use this verse as evidence that the people of paradise will see their Lord. Aţ-Ţabari and others narrated from al-Muzani from ash-Shâfa'i, and al-Ḥâkim said: Al-Aşamm told us that ar-Rabee' ibn Sulaymân said: "I was with Muhammad ibn Idrees ash-Shâfa'i, who had received a letter from Upper Egypt that said: 'What do you think about the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Nay! Surely, they [evil doers] will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day?﴿ *(Qur'an 83: 15)*' Ash-Shâfa'i (may Allah have mercy on him) said: 'Since they will be screened away because of [Allah's] wrath, that indicates that His close friends will see Him because He is pleased with them.'"[746]

With regard to the hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions indicating that the believers will see Him, they are mutawâtir reports which were narrated by the authors of the sound collections of hadiths.[747] The Companions, the Tâbi'oon, the well known, prominent scholars of Islam, and all the philosophical groups that claim to belong to Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah confirmed that the believers will see their Lord.[748]

3.4.11. Their giving the Imams precedence over the Prophets and Messengers

The Messengers are the best of mankind and the most deserving of being bearers of the message. Allah prepared them to reach the highest level of servitude, conveying the message, calling people and striving in jihad. ﴾Allah knows best with whom to place His Message﴿ *(Qur'an 6: 124)*. They are distinguished by the fact that they, out of all mankind, attained the position of Messenger,[749] and Allah enjoined mankind to follow them: ﴾We sent no Messenger, but to be obeyed by Allah's leave,﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 64)*. No one among mankind is to be given precedence over them.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥḥâwi said, explaining the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah: "We do not give precedence to any one of the close friends of Allah over any one of the Prophets (ﷺ). We say: One Prophet is better than all the close friends of Allah."[750] Giving precedence to the Imams over the Prophets is the way of the extreme Râfiḍis, as was pointed out by 'Abdul-Qâhir al-Baghdadi,[751] al-Qâḍi 'Iyâḍ[752] and Ibn Taymiyah.[753] This particular view became one of the fundamentals of the Twelvers. The author of *al-Wasâ'il* stated that giving precedence to the Imams over the Prophets is one of the fundamentals of the Shiite madh-hab, which they attribute to the Imams. He also said that the reports that they have concerning this are innumerable.[754]

In *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, al-Majlisi wrote a chapter entitled "Giving them (ﷺ) precedence over the Prophets and all of mankind" in which it says that Allah took a covenant from the Prophets and from the angels and all of creation, and that the Messengers of strong will only attained that status because of their love for the Imams.[755] This view on which the Twelver madh-hab finally settled went through changes and alterations that took it in the direction of extremism. With regard to the issue of giving the Prophets precedence over the

Imams, the Shia were divided into three groups, as al-Ash'ari said:

(i) The first group believed that the Prophets are better than the Imams, and some of them said that it is possible for the Imams to be better than the angels.

(ii) The second group claimed that the Imams are better than the Prophets and the angels.

(iii) The third group adopted the Mutazilite madh-hab but believed in imamate; they said that the angels and Prophets are better than the Imams.[756]

In *Awâ'il al-Maqâlât*, al-Mufeed added a fourth group who believe in the superiority of the Imams over all of the Prophets except for the five Messengers of strong will.[757] He does not state which of these views he regards as most correct; he simply says the matter needs further examination.[758] It seems that all of these groups were weakened as a result of the efforts of the shaykhs of the Safavid state and those who followed them, and the madh-hab settled on extreme views with regard to the Imams, to the extent that al-Majlisi said in the chapter in *Biḥâr al-Anwâr* that he wrote for this purpose: "The Messengers of strong will only became Messengers of strong will because of their love for the Imams, blessings of Allah be upon them."[759]

However, the one who refers to the Book of Allah (ﷻ) will find that there is no mention of their twelve Imams, let alone any suggestion that they are given precedence over the Prophets and Messengers of Allah. He will also notice that the Prophets, because of their higher status, are given precedence over others of the righteous slaves of Allah who are mentioned. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾They will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the *Ṣiddeeqoon* [those followers of the Prophets who were first and foremost to believe in them, like Abu

Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq], the martyrs, and the righteous﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 69).* Allah (ﷻ) listed His blessed slaves in four categories.[760] The Book of Allah, in all its verses, indicates that the Prophets are chosen above all others.[761] The people of the best three generations were unanimously agreed on the superiority of the Prophets over all others, and their consensus is binding proof. Ibn Taymiyah said: "The early generations (pious predecessors) of the Ummah, its leading scholars and the close friends of Allah (ﷻ) were unanimously agreed that the Prophets are superior to the close friends of Allah (ﷻ) who are not Prophets."[762]

Reason also clearly indicates that a Prophet is in a position whereby he must be obeyed; his commands, prohibitions and rulings must be heeded, with no restrictions. The fact that the Imam is a deputy and a follower cannot make sense unless he is of lower status than the Prophet. This is applicable to every Prophet and is not applicable to any of the Imams, so there is no Imam at all who is better than a Prophet; that is impossible.[763]

Moreover, there is reported in the books of the Shia themselves a report which is in accordance with the texts, scholarly consensus and common sense, and which contradicts this odd view. This report, narrated by al-Kulayni from Hishâm al-Aḥwal from Zayd ibn 'Ali, says that the Prophets are superior to the Imams and that anyone who says otherwise is misguided.[764] Ibn Bâbawayh narrated from aṣ-Ṣâdiq that the Prophets are more beloved to Allah (ﷻ) than is 'Ali (رضي الله عنه).[765]

3.5. The attitude of the Imami Shia towards the Noble Qur'an

The Imami Shiite belief and the attempt to defend it had a great impact in motivating some of the Shia to adopt dangerous ideas about

the Qur'an, Sunnah and Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). They doubted the Qur'an, rejected many of the proven hadiths, and impugned and condemned the Companions, claiming that they deliberately lied and distorted the Book of Allah.

3.5.1. The belief among some of them that the Book of Allah was distorted, and refutation of their claim

Some of the Râfiḍi Shia claimed that the noble Qur'an was distorted and that the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) omitted some soorahs and many verses that were revealed. These were supposedly about the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt; they say that they enjoined following them, forbade going against them, enjoined love of them, listed the names of their enemies and impugned and cursed those enemies. The Shia accuse the Companions of omitting from the Qur'an, among other things, the phrase "and We have made 'Ali your son-in-law" from Soorat ash-Sharḥ; this would suggest that 'Ali is the only son-in-law of the Messenger (ﷺ), to the exclusion of 'Uthmân. They were ignorant of the fact that this soorah was revealed in Makkah, so 'Ali was not the son-in-law of the Messenger (ﷺ) at the time it was revealed; the fact is that Ali married Fâtimah in Madinah, after the battle of Badr, as we have seen above. The Shia also think that among the material omitted from the Qur'an is what they call 'the chapter of imamate', which they claim is a lengthy soorah in which the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt are mentioned.[766]

Thus most of the claims of this group of Shia about the Qur'an are based on these ideas. They do not deny any of its rulings or principles, but their view focuses on the alleged omission of some verses that speak of the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams after him. These fabrications against the noble Qur'an were repeated by a number of Imami Shiite scholars, foremost among whom was their

famous 'Ḥujjah' Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qoob al-Kulayni (d. 329 AH). He was the author of *al-Kâfi*, which is regarded by the Shia as being as authentic to the same degree that the book of Bukhari is regarded by Ahl as-Sunnah as authentic. The Shiite author of *Tafseer aṣ-Ṣâfi* says: "It seems that 'the trustworthy of Islam' Muhammad ibn Ya'qoob al-Kulayni (may Allâh have mercy on him) also believed that the Qur'an had been distorted and some things omitted from it, because he narrated several reports to that effect in his book *al-Kâfi*, and he did not comment by suggesting that they were flawed or criticising them; on the contrary, he said at the beginning of his book that he trusted everything he narrated in it."[767]

This book of al-Kulayni's is full of these deviant claims, which are basically aimed at affirming the imamate of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) and the Imams who came after him. For example, al-Kulayni narrated from Abu Buṣayr from Abu Abdullah concerning the verse ﴿And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger﴾ *(Qur'an 33: 71)* that with regard to the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams after him, ﴿he has indeed achieved a great achievement﴾ *(Qur'an 33: 71)*. He claimed that the phrase 'with regard to the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams after him' was part of the original revelation.[768]

He also narrated from Jâbir that Abu Ja'far (ﷺ) said: "Why is 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib called Amir al-Mu'mineen?" He said: "Allah called him that, and this is how it was revealed in His Book: 'And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves (saying): Am I not your Lord, and is not Muhammad My Messenger, and is not 'Ali Amir al-Mu'mineen?'"[769]

Al-Kulayni also narrated that Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Naṣr said: "Abu al-Ḥasan was given a muṣḥaf, and he said: 'Do not look in it.' So I opened it and read, ﴿Those who disbelieve from

among the people of the Scripture [Jews and Christians] and *Al-Mushrikoon* were not going to leave [their disbelief] until there came to them clear evidence﴾ *(Qur'an 98: 1)*, and I found written in the soorah seventy men of Quraysh, mentioned by their names and the names of their fathers. He sent the muṣḥaf to me."[770]

Al-Kulayni claimed that no one compiled the Qur'an in totality except the Imams, who know it in its entirety; no one preserved it or memorised it as it was revealed except 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) and the Imams after him. This lie, which connected the compilation of the Qur'an to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), was repeated elsewhere. The author of *al-Iḥtijâj* suggested that when the Messenger (ﷺ) died: " 'Ali (عليه السلام) collected the Qur'an and brought it to the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr and showed it to them, because the Prophet (ﷺ) had instructed him to do that. When Abu Bakr opened it, on the first page he opened there appeared the evil deeds of the people. 'Umar jumped up and said: 'O 'Ali, take it away, we have no need of it.' So 'Ali took it and went away. Then they brought Zayd ibn Thâbit, who knew the Qur'an well, and 'Umar said to him: "Ali brought the Qur'an, and in it were the evil deeds of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr. We thought that we should compile the Qur'an and omit from it what it contained of evil deeds and exposure of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr.' Zayd agreed to that, then he said: 'If I complete my task of compiling the Qur'an as you asked, and 'Ali tells the people about the Qur'an that he has compiled, won't all your efforts be in vain?' 'Umar said: 'What should we do then?' Zayd said: 'You know best what to do.' 'Umar said: 'There is no option but to kill him and get rid of him.' They tried to kill him at the hand of Khâlid ibn al-Waleed, but were not able to do that."[771]

Undoubtedly, reports like this are the fabrication of sick and corrupt minds that want to accuse the Companions of distorting the Qur'an and conspiring to deprive 'Ali of the position of Imam of the

Muslims. When the fabricator of this report tries to praise him, he actually undermines him, because he describes him as keeping quiet when the Companions refused to accept his Qur'an. How can this be in accordance with the heroic attitude of 'Ali (ﷺ) in defending Islam? The words of 'Ali (ﷺ) himself refute all this nonsense: "The greatest in reward with regard to the muṣḥaf is Abu Bakr (ﷺ). May Allah have mercy on Abu Bakr; he was the first one to compile what is between the two covers (meaning the Qur'an)."[772]

Al-Kulayni did not stop there, though. He went on to attribute these fabrications and false claims about the distortion of the Qur'an to Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, claiming that he said: "The Qur'an that was brought down by revelation to Muhammad was seven thousand verses, and the verses that we recite are only 6,263; the rest are kept with Ahl al-Bayt."[773] Al-Kulayni claims that aṣ-Ṣâdiq said, concerning the Qur'an that was collected by 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, "It was said to be three times greater than this Qur'an of yours, and by Allah, there is not even one letter of your Qur'an in it."[774]

They also say that "Fâṭimah (ﷺ) lived for seventy-five days after the Prophet (ﷺ) died, suffering grief such as only Allah (ﷻ) knows. Allah (ﷻ) sent Jibreel to her to console her and comfort her, and to tell her about her father and what would happen to her children. 'Ali (ﷺ) listened to what he said until he wrote down a muṣḥaf three times the size of the Qur'an, in which there was nothing about ḥalâl and ḥarâm, but it did contain knowledge of what is to happen."[775]

Another Shiite scholar, 'Ali ibn Ibrâheem, reiterated the same claims that were mentioned by al-Kulayni. Muhammad Muḥsin, who is known as al-Fayḍ al-Kashshi, narrated from him in his commentary on the Qur'an and said: "What we may learn from the reports narrated via Ahl al-Bayt is that the Qur'an that is extant among us is not complete as it was revealed to Muhammad. Some of

it is different from what Allah (ﷻ) revealed, some of it has been distorted and changed, and many things have been omitted from it, such as the name of 'Ali in many places, the phrase 'the family of Muhammad' more than once, the names of the hypocrites in several places, and other things. It is not in the order that is pleasing to Allah and His Messenger." The same view was also held by 'Ali ibn Ibrâheem, who is known as al-Qummi, who wrote a commentary that is filled with these claims and exaggerations, and he started to write nonsense and claimed that there are verses concerning the appointment of 'Ali to the imamate that have been erased.[776]

The author of *Baṣâ'ir ad-Darajât*, aṣ-Ṣafâr, said, claiming that his chain of narration went back to Abu Ja'far: "No one can claim to have collected the entire Qur'an, physically and with the proper understanding, except for the Imams."[777] It was also narrated that he said: "Anyone who says that he compiled the entire Qur'an as Allah (ﷻ) revealed it is a liar. No one compiled it or memorised it as it was revealed except 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib and the Imams after him."[778] In *Tafseer al-'Ayâshi* it is narrated from Abu Abdullah: "If the Qur'an were recited as it was revealed, you would find us named in it."[779] In the same book, it is also narrated from Abu Ja'far: "Were it not for the fact that things have been added to and taken away from the Book of Allah, our rights would not be hidden from anyone who has any sense."[780]

There are many reports in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia which clearly state that the Qur'an is distorted, and their senior scholars spoke of the great number of such reports, reaching the level of being mutawâtir. Al-Mufeed said: "There are abundant reports from the Imams of guidance, who are of the family of Muhammad (ﷺ), that speak of the distortion of the Qur'an and what some of the wrongdoers did in terms of omitting and taking away."[781]

Hâshim al-Baḥrâni,[782] one of their senior interpreters of Qur'an, says: "It should be noted that the fact which no one can ignore, on the basis of the mutawâtir reports we have and others, is that this Qur'an that we have was subjected to a great many changes after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died. Those who compiled it after he was gone omitted many words and verses."[783] He also says: "This issue (the distortion of the Qur'an) is so clear to me, after examining the reports, that we could rule that this view is one of the fundamentals of Shiism and one of the greatest supports for the belief in imamate."[784]

Ni'matullah al-Jazâ'iri[785] said: "The reports that point to this (distortion of the Qur'an) are more than two thousand hadith, and several scholars claimed that they (these reports) are abundant in number, such as al-Mufeed, al-Muḥaqqiq ad-Dâmâd and al-'Allâmah al-Majlisi."[786]

It is the view of their senior scholars that the reports in their books which claim that the Qur'an has been distorted and altered are abundant, to the level of being mutawâtir, and that the number of these reports reaches into the thousands. For this reason, some of the scholars stated with certainty that this belief is one of the fundamentals of their madh-hab and the greatest support for the belief in imamate. In addition to the thousands of reports in their books which claimed that the Qur'an has been distorted, this corrupt belief is confirmed in the views of their scholars, their ideologues and those individuals who are considered qualified to exercise ijtihâd. We do not have enough room here to quote all of them, but I shall refer to those who stated that there was consensus on this matter among their senior scholars.

Al-Mufeed says: "They (the Imami Shia) are agreed that the leaders of misguidance tampered with a great deal of the Qur'an, and they changed it from the way it was revealed and the Sunnah of the

Prophet (ﷺ). The Mutazilites, Kharijites, Murja'is and Sunnis all agreed on a view different from that of the Imami Shia in all that we have mentioned."[787]

An-Noori aṭ-Ṭubrusi (d. 1320 AH), one of their senior scholars in later times, wrote a huge volume called *Faṣl al-Khiṭâb fi Ithbât Taḥreef Kitâb Rabb al-Arbâb* (The Ultimate Proof of the Distortion of the Book of the Lord of Lords) to prove the Râfiḍi Shiite claims about the Qur'an.[788] He began with three introductions, followed by two chapters entitled: "On the evidence for the distortion of the Qur'an" and "Refutation of those among the Ummah who say that the Qur'an is sound."

In his book, aṭ-Ṭubrusi quoted thousands of reports to show that the Qur'an has been distorted as they claim. The first chapter is composed of twelve sections; in the last two sections alone, he quotes 1602 reports. This is in addition to what he quoted in the other sections of this chapter, in the three introductions and in the second chapter. Apologising for the small number of reports that he had collected, he said: "We are quoting reports to support the idea even though we do not know about all the reports."[789] To prove the authenticity of these reports, he wrote: "It should be noted that these reports are transmitted from the reliable books that our scholars refer to in order to decide about Sharia rulings and the Prophet's Sunnah."[790] After including a long list of names of their scholars who believe that the Qur'an has been distorted, a list that took up to five pages of his book, he said: "On the basis of the names that I have listed, even though I cannot claim that I included everyone, we can claim that this view is the prominent view among the earlier scholars, and those who differed with them are limited to a few individuals whom we shall mention below."[791] Then he said that those who held a different view were: aṣ-Ṣadooq, al-Murtaḍa and Shaykh aṭ-Ṭâifah aṭ-Ṭoosi. He said: "No one among the earlier scholars is known to have agreed with them."[792]

He said that aṭ-Ṭubrusi, the author of *Majma' al-Bayân*, followed the view of these earlier scholars and that up until his time, no different view was known except from these four shaykhs.[793] Then he tried to find an excuse to explain why these scholars did not affirm that the Qur'an has been distorted; he claimed that it was a matter of taqiyyah and 'appeasing the other group' (meaning the Sunnis). He said, excusing aṭ-Ṭoosi for what he narrated in his book *at-Tibyân* about the Qur'an not having been distorted: "It is no secret to the one who examines the book *at-Tibyân* that the author's approach is clearly trying his utmost to appease the other group (the Sunnis). This would be very strange were it not the case that he is trying to appease them."[794]

An-Noori aṭ-Ṭubrusi was preceded in trying to find excuses for the scholars by Ni'matullah al-Jazâ'iri who said, after narrating that there was consensus among the Imami scholars that the Qur'an had been distorted: "Yes, al-Murtaḍa, aṣ-Ṣadooq and Shaykh aṭ-Ṭubrusi held a different view and stated that what is between the two covers of this muṣḥaf is the Qur'an and nothing else, and that no distortion or alteration has affected it. It seems that they said this for a number of reasons such as: to leave no excuse for anyone to undermine the Qur'an by saying that if it is possible for that to happen to the Qur'an, then how is it permissible to follow its teachings and rulings when it is possible that it has been distorted? How could these prominent scholars narrate in their books many reports saying that these things happened to the Qur'an and that such-and-such a verse was revealed and then changed?"[795]

Thus it seems that the belief that the Qur'an has been distorted, altered and changed is one on which all Râfiḍi Shiite scholars agree. That is what aṭ-Ṭubrusi established in *Faṣl al-Khitâb*, and it is indicated by the previous statements of their senior scholars. None of their scholars disagreed about this belief until the time when *Fasl al-*

Khiṭâb was written, apart from four of them, and the reason for that is given as taqiyyah and seeking to appease the Sunnis, according to what was stated by aṭ-Ṭubrusi and al-Jazâ'iri before him. This has been proven by contemporary research that examined this issue and supported this view by quoting from the Shiite reports a great deal of evidence that illustrates their belief that the Qur'an was distorted and that is mentioned in the books of these four shaykhs.[796] This proves that these four also believed in this idea and agreed with what all other Râfiḍi Shiite scholars believe about the Qur'an having been distorted, even though they stated otherwise for the purpose of taqiyyah, hypocrisy and deceiving Ahl as-Sunnah.[797]

The proof for what I am saying is the fact that none of those who claimed that the Qur'an was distorted were subject to any criticism from the Shia. For example, al-Kulayni is still respected, trusted and honoured, and he is the primary religious authority for all Shia today. Even though the contemporary Shia say that they deny the idea of the Qur'an having been distorted or of anything having been added or subtracted, we do not find any of them refuting al-Kulayni in a clear manner, or expressing distrust in him or rejecting his view on this issue. In fact, some have tried in a twisted manner to defend him and find excuses for him.[798]

If these people are sincere, then they have to disavow anyone who says that the noble Qur'an has been distorted, and they should not hesitate to regard as a disbeliever anyone who denies a single word of the Qur'an. They should realise that denying some of it is like denying all of it, because that is clearly undermining what is proven from the Prophet (ﷺ) and what is the foundation of Islam, according to all Muslims.

The noble Qur'an is the divine Book that has not been subjected to any alteration or change because Allah (ﷻ) promised and guaranteed to preserve it, unlike the Torah and Gospel. Allah

(ﷻ) did not guarantee to preserve them; He made it the responsibility of the people, but they neglected their duty. Ash-Shâṭibi narrated from Abu 'Umar ad-Dâni that Abu al-Ḥasan al-Muntâb said: "I was with al-Qâḍi Abu Isḥâq Ismâ'eel ibn Isḥâq one day, and it was said to him: 'Why was it possible for the people of the Torah to alter it and not possible for the people of the Qur'an?' Al-Qâḍi said: 'Allah (ﷻ) says concerning the people of the Torah: ﴾For to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 44)*, so He delegated the preservation of it to them; hence alteration was possible in their case. And Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Verily We: it is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* [i.e. the Qur'an] and surely, We will guard it [from corruption]﴿ *(Qur'an 15: 9)*. So it is not possible for anyone to alter it.' 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'I went to Abu Abdullah al-Muḥâmili and told him what I had heard, and he said: "I have never heard anything better than this."'"[799]

The Ummah throughout the ages has agreed that the noble Qur'an that Allah (ﷻ) revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Qur'an that is now extant among the Muslims; nothing has been added or taken away, and nothing has been changed or altered. It is not possible for anything of that nature to happen to it because of the promise from Allah (ﷻ) to preserve and protect it. No one disagrees with this except the Râfiḍi Shia who claimed that the noble Qur'an has been subjected to distortion, changes and alterations and that the Companions are the ones who distorted the Qur'an for their own worldly interests. This belief of theirs is false, and there is evidence from the noble Qur'an, the words of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt and common sense. We will discuss this in detail:

3.5.1.a. Evidence from the Noble Qur'an

The verses which clearly state that Allah (ﷻ) has guaranteed to preserve the Qur'an and that it cannot be subjected to any distortion or alteration are numerous and include the following:

﴾Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* [i.e. the Qur'an] and surely, We will guard it [from corruption].﴿ *(Qur'an 15: 9)*

﴾And recite what has been revealed to you [O Muhammad] of the Book [the Qur'an] of your Lord [i.e. recite it, understand and follow its teachings and act on its orders and preach it to men]. None can change His Words, and none will you find as a refuge other than Him.﴿ *(Qur'an 18: 27)*

﴾Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it, [it is] sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise.﴿ *(Qur'an 41: 42)*

﴾*Alif-Lâm-Meem.* [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] This is the Book [the Qur'an], whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqoon [the pious].﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 1-2)*

﴾Alif-Lâm-Râ [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings]. [This is] a Book, the Verses whereof are perfected [in every sphere of knowledge], and then explained in detail from One [Allah], Who is All-Wise Well-Acquainted [with all things].﴿ *(Qur'an 11: 1)*

﴾Never did We send a Messenger or a Prophet before you but when he did recite the Revelation or narrated or spoke, Satan threw [some falsehood] in it. But Allah abolishes that which Satan throws in. Then Allah establishes His Revelations. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise.﴿ *(Qur'an 22: 52)*

﴾Move not your tongue concerning [the Qur'an, O Muhammad] to make haste therewith. It is for Us to collect it and to give you [O Muhammad] the ability to recite it [the Qur'an].﴿ *(Qur'an 75: 16-17)*

These verses clearly indicate that Allah (ﷻ) is preserving His Book and confirming its verses, that no falsehood can come to it from

before it or behind it, and that ﴾Allah's Promise is the Truth; and whose words can be truer than those of Allah?﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 122).*

These verses, which state that Allah (ﷻ) will preserve His Book and protect it from distortion or alteration, are so clear that there is no need for further explanation or clarification. Similarly, Allah (ﷻ) praises the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in the noble Qur'an, which confirms that what the Râfiḍi Shia claim about their having distorted the Qur'an is a lie.[800] Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴾And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr and also those who followed them exactly [in Faith]. Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow [paradise], to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 100)*

﴾Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the *Bay'ah* [pledge] to you [O Muhammad] under the tree, He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down As-Sakeenah [calmness and tranquillity] upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory.﴿ *(Qur'an 48: 18)*

There are other verses as well that praise the Companions; we will discuss and explain them in more detail below.

After quoting these two types of verses (those that speak of the Qur'an being protected from distortion and those that contain praise for the Companions), we say to the Râfiḍi Shia: Your view that the Qur'an has been distorted is contradicted by these verses in which Allah (ﷻ) confirms that this Qur'an has not been distorted and will never be distorted because He is the One who has guaranteed to preserve it and protect it from distortion and alteration. He also praised in the highest terms the Companions of His Prophet (ﷺ), whom you have accused of distorting the Qur'an; He described them as having been sincere and having believed in Allah and His

Messenger. So you have one of two options with regard to these verses:

1) You admit and acknowledge that these verses came from Allah (ﷻ), in which case you have no choice but to accept and believe what these verses indicate, namely the soundness of the noble Qur'an and its being free of any distortion or alteration; or
2) You deny that it is from Allah (ﷻ), which is disbelief in Allah because the one who denies a single verse of the Qur'an and believes that it cannot be soundly attributed to Allah is a disbeliever, according to the consensus of all Muslims.[801]

3.5.1.b. Evidence from the words of their Imams

There are many reports from their Imams, whom they regard as infallible, in which they urge the Shia to adhere to the Book of Allah and to refer everything to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

One of these reports says that Moosa ibn Ja'far was asked: "Do you find everything you need in the Qur'an and Sunnah, or do you have your own opinions?" He replied: "No, everything is in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ)."[802]

It was narrated that Abdullah said: "Whoever goes against the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is a disbeliever."[803] It was narrated from Abu Ja'far that he said: "Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, has not omitted anything the Ummah needs but He has revealed it in His Book and explained it to His Messenger (ﷺ). He has set a limit for all things and sent proof to indicate it."[804] It was narrated that Abu Abdullah said: "There is nothing but there is something in the Qur'an or Sunnah about it."[805]

The one who studies these reports will learn two important things:

- The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, like others of the early generations of this Ummah, believed in the soundness of the noble Qur'an; otherwise they would not have asked their followers to adhere to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ) and rejected everything else. Moreover, they told them that there is nothing that is not addressed in the Book of Allah or the Sunnah, and they said that they did not have anything that was not in these two sources.
- There are reports attributed to the Imams that say that the Qur'an was distorted, but they did not actually say that. They are innocent of it and have nothing to do with those who fabricated these reports.[806]

3.5.1.c. Rational evidence

Just as the reports of the Qur'an and Sunnah show that the claims of the Râfiḍis about the distortion of the noble Qur'an are false, reason also indicates that these claims are false. That is because of the serious implications of saying that the Qur'an has been distorted; it implies slander against Allah (ﷻ) and against the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions (رضي الله عنهم), as well as the pure Imams of Ahl al-Bayt. It is a slander against Allah (ﷻ) because it implies that He did not keep his promise to protect the Qur'an — exalted be Allah far above that. It is a slander against the Prophet (ﷺ) because it implies that he did not convey the noble Qur'an completely, that he told many verses to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) only and not to anyone else. It is a slander against the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), whom the Râfiḍi Shia accuse of distorting the Qur'an for their own interests. It is a slander against 'Ali and the Imams who came after him because it implies that they did not convey to the people the Qur'an that they had, and they did not call the the people to it. That constitutes concealing the Book of Allah, and Allah (ﷻ) warned

against that: ﴾Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers.﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 159)*

If the Râfiḍi Shia accepted only rational evidence, then the negative implications resulting from this foul belief would have been the greatest deterrent. It would have compelled them to give up this belief and repent to Allah (ﷻ) from everything that they have fabricated against Him, His Prophet (ﷺ), the noble Companions of His Prophet and the pure Ahl al-Bayt.[807]

3.5.2. Their belief that the Qur'an is not binding proof (meaning that it is invalid) unless the one who is in charge of it is present

Al-Kulayni, the author of *Uṣool al-Kâfi,* which for the Shia is like *Sahih Bukhari* is for Ahl as-Sunnah,[808] narrated: "The Qur'an is not binding proof unless the one who is in charge of it is present. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was in charge of the Qur'an, and obedience to him was obligatory, and he was the proof against the people after the Messenger of Allah."[809] This view is to be found in a number of their main books, such as *Rijâl al-Kashshi,*[810] *'Ilal ash-Sharâ'i,*[811] *al-Maḥâsin,*[812] *Wasâ'il ash-Shi'ah*[813] and others. How can such a thing be said of the Book of Allah (ﷻ), which He revealed as guidance to mankind, saying: ﴾Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right﴿ *(Qur'an 17: 9)*?

The Rightly Guided Caliph 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Book of Allah contains stories of what came before you, news of what is to come after you and rulings to judge between you; it is serious and not in jest. Any tyrant who abandons it, Allah will destroy him; whoever seeks guidance in anything other than it, Allah will send him astray. It is the strong rope, the wise reminder and the straight path. It is that

which cannot be affected by whims and desires. Tongues will not stumble over it, its wonders will never end and the people of knowledge will never tire of it. The one who quotes from it will be speaking the truth, the one who acts upon it will be rewarded, the one who judges in accordance with it will be just, and the one who calls others to it will guide them to a straight path."[814]

Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) said: "Allah makes a guarantee to the one who reads the Qur'an and acts upon it that he will not go astray in this world and will not be doomed in the hereafter." Then he recited this verse: ﴾He [Allah] said: 'Get you down [from the paradise to the earth], both of you, together, some of you are an enemy to some others. Then if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My Guidance he shall neither go astray, nor shall be distressed.'﴿ *(Qur'an 20: 123)*

In the Shias' own books, in their most reliable sources, there are reports narrated from Ahl al-Bayt that contradict this view of theirs. For example: "When you become confused by turmoils like pieces of black night, then refer to the Qur'an, for it will be an intercessor whose intercession will be accepted; whoever follows it, it will lead him to paradise, but whoever puts it behind his back, it will drive him to hell. And it is the guide to the best way."[815] In *Nahj al-Balâghah*, which is attributed to 'Ali (ﷺ) and considered one of their most trustworthy references, it says: "The Qur'an commands and rebukes, is silent yet speaks, and it is the proof of Allah (ﷻ) against His creation."[816]

There are other texts that support these reports and highlight the extent of the contradiction and confusion found in the sources of these people. Since their reports — as you can see — contradict one another, they came up with a dangerous methodology, which is to adopt the view that is contrary to what the Muslim masses (meaning Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah) believe. Anyone who studies this view,

which is narrated in the books of the Shia, will realise that it was introduced by an enemy who was filled with resentment and hatred and who wanted to turn the Shia away from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and lead them astray from His guidance.

The Shiite view connects the validity of the Qur'an to the presence of the one who is supposed to be in charge of it, which is one of the twelve Imams, since the Qur'an was explained to 'Ali, and he transmitted the knowledge of the Qur'an to the rest of the twelve Imams. Each Imam passed on this knowledge to the one who came after him until it ended with the twelfth Imam. According to the Twelvers, he is absent and has been lost for more than eleven centuries, but some Shiite and other groups believe that he does not exist. As long as the validity of the Qur'an is linked to this absent or missing Imam, the logical conclusion is that the validity of the Qur'an is suspended now because of the absence or non-existence of the one who is supposed to be in charge of it. Under these circumstances, the Book cannot be referred to or quoted as evidence because what counts as evidence is the word of the Imam only, and the Imam is absent. Therefore the Shiite view is that the Qur'an cannot be used as evidence. That is sufficient misguidance, and it diverts people away from the Book of Allah, but that is not the end of the conspiracy against the Book of Allah and the Shia. It is just one link in the chain, one in a series of conspiracies aimed at turning the Shia away from the Book of Allah (ﷻ).[817]

It is a well-established fact in Islam that knowledge of the noble Qur'an was not a secret to be transmitted through a certain line, and 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) did not receive any special treatment in that regard to the exclusion of the other Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Companions (رضي الله عنهم) were the pioneers who had the honour of receiving this Qur'an from the Messenger of mankind Muhammad (ﷺ) and transmitting it to all generations. The Shia, however, went

against this principle. They believe that Allah (ﷻ) singled out their twelve Imams for knowledge of the entire Qur'an, that the Imams are the only ones who can interpret it, and that whoever seeks knowledge of the Qur'an from anyone else has gone astray.[818] Some Sunni sources state that the origin and roots of this view go back to Ibn Saba', who said: "The Qur'an is one of nine parts, and its knowledge is with 'Ali."[819] This view is mentioned frequently in the books of the Twelver Shia, in various kinds of reports, as we shall see below.

In a lengthy report in *Uṣool al-Kâfi*, it is narrated that Abu Abdullah said: "The Qur'an would be sufficient for the people if they could find someone to interpret it. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) explained it to one man, and he explained it to the Imams; that man is 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib."[820] In a number of Shiite sources, which they consider reliable, it is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Allah sent the Qur'an down to me. Whoever goes against it will go astray, and whoever seeks knowledge of it with anyone other than 'Ali is doomed."[821] The books of the Shia also claim that Abu Ja'far said: "O Qatâdah, are you the jurist of the people of Basra?" He replied: "That is what they say." Abu Ja'far (ﷺ) said: "I have heard that you interpret the Qur'an?" Qatâdah said to him: "Yes."... He said: "Woe to you, O Qatâdah, the Qur'an can only be known by the one to whom it is addressed."[822]

They have very many reports of this nature, which could fill an entire volume. They all emphasise the same concept: that "only the twelve Imams have knowledge of the Qur'an, and it is kept with them, and through it they know all things."[823] The response to that is what Allah (ﷻ) said to those who sought a sign to prove the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): ﴾Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book [the Qur'an] which is recited to them?﴿ *(Qur'an 29: 51)* The noble Qur'an is the witness, the evidence and the proof. Whoever seeks knowledge of the Qur'an

from the Qur'an or from the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) or from the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), including 'Ali, will be guided.

This notion — that the one seeking knowledge of the Qur'an from anyone other than 'Ali is doomed — is not part of Islam, and it is known to be false beyond any doubt. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not single out any one of his Companions for knowledge of Sharia to the exclusion of others. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the *Dhikr* [reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'an)], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 44)*. This verse proves that explanation of the Qur'an is for all people, not just one individual or group, even if they are members of his household. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) stated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not single him out for specific knowledge to the exclusion of other people.[824] The Prophet (ﷺ) addressed his Companions and those who came after them and encouraged them to convey his Sunnah, and he did not single out one of them in that regard. He said: "May Allah make his face radiant, the one who hears the hadith from us and memorises it so that he can convey it to others, because it may be that a person who has some knowledge but does not fully understand it may convey it to someone who has better understanding than him."[825] This hadith was also narrated in the major reference books of the Twelver Shias,[826] and it will count as evidence against them.

Let us consider the claims that the noble Qur'an was not addressed to anyone but the twelve Imams, that no one knows the Qur'an except them and that the Qur'an is only understood by those to whom it is addressed.[827] According to this sick understanding, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the Tâbi'oon and the leading scholars of Islam throughout the ages would be regarded as being doomed and as causing the doom of others because they

interpret the Qur'an properly, or because they believe that there are things in the Book of Allah that no one has any excuse for not knowing. Some of this is known by the Arabs because of their language, some of it cannot be interpret fully by anyone except the scholars, and there is some that no one knows the interpretation of except Allah (ﷻ).[828]

The Shia maintain that no one understands the Qur'an except the Imams, and that they know the entire Qur'an. This is a claim that requires evidence, and it is refuted on the basis of both reason and reports. It should be noted that the Prophet (ﷺ) explained to his Companions the meaning of the Qur'an as well as its words. The verse ﴾And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the *Dhikr* [reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'an)], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them,﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 44)* refers to both the meanings and the words.

Abu 'Abdur-Raḥmân as-Sulami said: "Those who taught us the Qur'an — such as 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân, Abdullah ibn Mas'ood and others — told us that when they learned ten verses from the Prophet (ﷺ), they would not move on until they had learned what they contained of knowledge and righteous deeds. They said: 'So we learned the Qur'an and knowledge and righteous deeds all together.'"[829] Hence they used to spend some time memorising each soorah, because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴾[This is] a Book [the Qur'an] which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember.﴿ *(Qur'an 38: 29)*

﴾Do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully?﴿ *(Qur'an 4: 82)*

﴾Have they not pondered over the Word [of Allah, i.e. what is sent down to the Prophet]...?﴿ *(Qur'an 23: 68)*

Pondering over the Qur'an without understanding its meanings is not possible. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand﴿ *(Qur'an 12: 2)*. Understanding the Qur'an means comprehending it, and it is well known that the point of any statement is that its meaning should be understood. A statement is not mere words, and this is even more important in the case of the Qur'an.

For these reasons, one group of Shia no longer accepted or believed in this view. They said that the apparent meanings of the Qur'an are not something that is known exclusively to the Twelvers, and that others could understand them too, but as for the hidden meanings of the verses, that is something that is known to the Imams alone. Thus there was a major debate between the two groups as to whether the apparent meanings of the Qur'an are binding. The former group believe that no one knows the meaning of the entire Qur'an, both apparent and hidden, except the Imams; the latter group believes that the apparent meanings of the Qur'an are binding because of the general meaning of the call to ponder and understand the Qur'an.[830]

The claim that the Qur'an was interpreted for 'Ali (ﷺ) alone is contrary to the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾With clear signs and Books [We sent the Messengers]. And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the *Dhikr* [reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'an)], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 44)*. The clear signs are for all people, not for 'Ali (ﷺ) alone, as we have stated above. A person who denies that is left with one of two options: either to say that the Messenger did not convey what was revealed to him, or to reject what the Qur'an says, which is contrary to reason and the well established principles of Islam.

The claim that knowledge of the Qur'an was given exclusively to the Imams is contrary to the fact that a large number of the

Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were well known for interpreting the Qur'an, including the first four Caliphs, Ibn Mas'ood, Ibn 'Abbâs, Zayd ibn Thâbit and others. 'Ali (ﷺ) praised the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ).[831] Ibn Taymiyah said: "A great deal of commentary on the Qur'an was transmitted from Ibn 'Abbâs with proven chains of narration, and there is little mention of 'Ali in these reports. Ibn 'Abbâs narrated from more than one of the Companions; he narrated from 'Umar, Abu Hurayrah, 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, Zayd ibn Thâbit, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Usâmah ibn Zayd and others among the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, but the reports he narrated from 'Ali are very few. The authors of the sound collections of hadiths did not narrate any of the hadiths of Ibn 'Abbâs about Qur'an interpretation from 'Ali, although they narrated his hadiths from 'Umar, Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, Abu Hurayrah and others. There is no book of Qur'an interpretation known to the Muslims that is proven to be from 'Ali. These books of hadiths and commentary on the Qur'an are filled with reports from the Companions and Tâbi'een, but what is narrated from 'Ali is very little, and what is narrated of Qur'an interpretation from Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq is falsely attributed to Ja'far."[832]

Ja'far spoke about how people were keen to attribute fabricated statements to him and said that their idea that knowledge of the Qur'an was given exclusively to 'Ali leads to undermining the fact that the Qur'an was transmitted from the Companions to subsequent generations in mutawâtir reports, because it was not transmitted — according to their claim — from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) except by one person, namely 'Ali (ﷺ). This view is a conspiracy aimed at keeping people away from the Book of Allah and making them turn away from pondering it, seeking its guidance, thinking about the lessons it contains, and studying its meanings. According to the Shiite religion, there is no way to understand the meanings of the Qur'an except through the twelve Imams; everyone else is deprived of benefiting from it. This is an attempt or a trick with

a clear aim, because the Qur'an was revealed by Allah (ﷻ) in a plain Arabic tongue and is addressed to all people: ﴾Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand.﴿ *(Qur'an 12: 2)*

﴾This [the Qur'an] is a plain statement for mankind, a guidance and instruction to those who are Al-Muttaqoon [the pious].﴿

(Qur'an 3: 138)

Allah (ﷻ) has commanded His slaves to ponder it, learn its lessons and heed its prohibitions. It does not make sense to say to someone who does not understand what is said to him: "Ponder that of which you have no understanding or knowledge."[833] This is an attempt to turn people away from that great store of knowledge of the interpretation of the Qur'an that was transmitted to us by the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the early generations of the Ummah and the scholars. This great treasure has no value or worth, according to the Shiite religion, because it was not narrated from the twelve Imams. Some of their contemporary shaykhs have stated this clearly, saying: "All the commentary on the Qur'an that was narrated from anyone except Ahl al-Bayt is of no value and is not to be taken into consideration."[834]

Their main books of Qur'an interpretation, such as those of al-Qummi, al-'Iyâshi, aṣ-Ṣâfi and al-Burhân, and their main books of hadith, such as *al-Kâfi* and *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, have tried to give interpretations of the Book of Allah which are attributed to Ahl al-Bayt. In most cases, though, their interpretations demonstrate blatant ignorance of the Book of Allah and a deviant interpretation of its verses. Their explanations are very twisted and cannot be soundly attributed to the scholars among Ahl al-Bayt, because they have no connection to the meaning of the words; they are not indicated by the words or by the Qur'anic context, as we shall see below. According to this belief, this is supposed to represent the best knowledge of the

scholars of Ahl al-Bayt; in fact, it undermines them and attributes a great deal of ignorance to them by people who claim to love and support them.[835]

3.5.3. Their belief that the Qur'an has hidden meanings that are different from its apparent meanings

The Shia are of the view that the Qur'an has apparent and hidden meanings, and that the people only know the apparent meanings; as for the hidden meanings, no one knows them except the Imams and those who learn from them. With such ideas, they opened the door to heretics, followers of whims and desires and destructive sects to tamper with the Qur'an. They all tried to plot against it and wanted to extinguish the light of Islam with their fabrications, but Allah (ﷻ) will complete His light even if the polytheists hate it. The Shia exploited this idea of apparent and hidden meanings to try to interpret the Qur'an to be in accordance with their beliefs and to serve their ideas about imamate. They also took the Qur'an as a means to attack and condemn the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), while at the same time praising Ahl al-Bayt and attributing to them things that they themselves would deny. In this regard, the Râfiḍi Shia came up with views that contradict everything that was narrated about the interpretation of the Qur'an, views for which there is no support on the basis of reports, reason, Arabic language or logic.[836]

The roots of the esoteric interpretation go back to the Saba'i groups. Ibn Saba' tried to find support in the Book of Allah, by means of esoteric misinterpretations, for his idea that the Prophet (ﷺ) would come back to life. He said: "It is strange that those who claim that 'Eesa will come back to life do not believe that Muhammad will come back to life when Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Verily, He Who has given

you [O Muhammad] the Qur'an will surely, bring you back to *Ma'âd* [the place of return.]﴿ *(Qur'an 28: 85).*"[837]

Some of the books of Ahl as-Sunnah have narrated examples of the Shiite misinterpretations of the Book of Allah, but what we have discovered today is something that poses a great danger to people's belief, thought and culture. Imam al-Ash'ari,[838] al-Baghdadi,[839] ash-Shahrastâni[840] and others narrated from al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed, who was one of the extremists according to the consensus of both Sunnis and Shiites, and after whom the Mugheeri sect is named, that he explained that what was meant by the word 'Satan' in the verse ﴾...like Satan, when he says to man: 'Disbelieve in Allah'﴿ *(Qur'an 59: 16)* was 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ).

This exact interpretation was picked up by the Twelvers, who wrote it down in their main reference books; it appears in the books of Qur'an interpretation of al-Ayyâshi,[841] aṣ-Ṣâfi[842] and al-Qummi,[843] and in *al-Burhân*[844] and *Biḥâr al-Anwâr.*[845] It was narrated from Abu Ja'far concerning the verse: ﴾And Satan will say when the matter has been decided...﴿ *(Qur'an 14: 22)*: "That refers to the second one ['Umar]; there is no place in the Qur'an where it says 'and Satan said...' but it refers to the second one." The books of the Twelvers go further than al-Mugheerah did in setting down a rule for this deviant interpretation of the Book of Allah.[846]

These reports, which the books of the Twelver Shia attribute to Ja'far al-Bâqir, are actually some of the lies of al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed and his ilk. Adh-Dhahabi quoted Katheer an-Nuwa'[847] as saying that Abu Ja'far said: "Allah and His Messenger have nothing to do with al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed and Bayân ibn Sam'ân, for they attributed fabrications to us, Ahl al-Bayt."[848] Al-Kashshi narrated in *Rijâl al-Kashshi* that Abu Abdullah said: "May Allah curse al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed; he used to tell lies about us."[849] Al-Kashshi

also narrated many other reports of this type.[850] It may be noted that al-Ash'ari, al-Baghdadi, Ibn Ḥazm and Nishwân al-Ḥimyari were all agreed that Jâbir al-Ja'fi, who wrote the first Shia book of Qur'an interpretation using that esoteric methodology, was the successor of al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed,[851] who said that what was meant by the Satan in the Qur'an was Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Umar. These people were dangerous elements who were learning from one another, and that led to the corruption of Shiism.[852]

The Shaykh of the Shia of his era — and this is who they refer to when they use the title 'al-'Allâmah' — whose name was Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli, quoted evidence for 'Ali's entitlement to the imamate (caliphate) by saying: "The thirtieth piece of evidence is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿He has let loose the two seas [the salt and fresh water] meeting together. Between them is a barrier which none of them can transgress.﴾ *(Qur'an 55: 19-20).*" He said that this refers to 'Ali and Fâṭimah; that ﴿Between them is a barrier which none of them can transgress﴾ refers to the Prophet (ﷺ); and that ﴿Out of them both come out pearl and coral﴾ *(Qur'an 55: 22)* refers to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

When Ibn al-Muṭahhar quoted that as evidence, Ibn Taymiyah said: "This man and his ilk say things that they do not understand, and it is more like delirium than interpretation of the Qur'an. It is akin to the interpretation of the heretics and *Qarâmiṭah* of the Qur'an. Indeed it is worse than much of that; it is the way in which the heretics seek to undermine the Qur'an. Interpreting the Qur'an in this way is one of the greatest ways of maligning it."[853]

The following are some examples of the ways in which the Râfiḍi Shia distorted the verses of the noble Qur'an because they opened the door wide to esoteric interpretations:

3.5.3.a. Their distortion of the meaning of tawḥeed, which is the foundation of the religion, to mean entitlement to the imamate

It was narrated from Abu Ja'far that he said: "Allah never sent any Prophet except with loyalty to our imamate and disavowal of our enemies.[854] That is what Allah referred to when He said in His Book: ﴾And verily, We have sent among every Ummah [community, nation] a Messenger [proclaiming]: 'Worship Allah [Alone], and avoid [or keep away from] *Tâghoot* [all false deities, i.e. do not worship *Tâghoot* besides Allah].'﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 36)*"

3.5.3.b. Their distortion of the concept of divinity to mean imamate

With regard to the verse, ﴾And Allah said [O mankind!]: "Take not *ilâhain* [two gods in worship]. Verily, He [Allah] is [the] only One *Ilâh* [God]..."﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 51)*, Abu Abdullah said: "What is meant by that is: Do not take two Imams; he is only one Imam."[855]

3.5.3.c. Their distortion of the meaning of the word 'Lord' in the Qur'an to mean the Imam

With regard to the interpretation of the verse ﴾And the disbeliever is ever a helper [of Satan] against his Lord﴿ *(Qur'an 25: 55)*, al-Qummi said in his commentary: "The 'disbeliever' is the second one (meaning 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb); he was a helper against Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ)."[856]

Al-Kâshâni said in *al-Baṣâ'ir* that al-Bâqir was asked about the interpretation of this verse, and he said: "This verse has a hidden meaning, and the words 'his Lord' refer to 'Ali, since 'Ali is his lord in the context of imamate."[857]

3.5.3.d. Their distortion of the meanings of the word 'Word' to mean the Imams

They said with regard to the interpretation of the verse: ﴾And had it not been for a decisive Word [gone forth already], the matter would have been judged between them﴿ *(Qur'an 42: 21)*, "The Word is the Imam."[858]

With regard to the verse: ﴾No change can there be in the Words of Allah﴿ *(Qur'an 10: 64)*, they said, "There can be no change in the imamate."[859]

3.5.3.e. Their distortion of the meanings of the words 'mosque', 'Ka'bah' and 'qiblah' to mean the Imams

With regard to the verse: ﴾You should face Him only in each and every place of worship [*masjid*]﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 29)*, they interpreted the word *masjid* (which is literally a place of prostration, but normally means a mosque) as meaning the Imams.[860] With regard to the verse: ﴾Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer [*masjid*]﴿ *(Qur'an 7: 31)*, they said, "It [masjid] means the Imams."[861] With regard to the verse, ﴾And the mosques are for Allah [Alone], so invoke not anyone along with Allah﴿ *(Qur'an 72: 18)*, they interpreted it as: "The Imam is from the family of Muhammad, so do not take anyone else as an Imam."[862]

Aṣ-Ṣâdiq said, narrating from them: "We [Imams] are the holy land (Makkah), we are the Ka'bah of Allah and we are the qiblah of Allah."[863] They equate 'prostration' in the Qur'an with loving and supporting the Imams, so they interpret the verse: ﴾They used to be called to prostrate themselves [offer prayers], while they were healthy and good [in the life of the world, but they did not]﴿ *(Qur'an 68: 43)*, as meaning: "They were called to support the imamate of 'Ali in this world."[864]

3.5.3.f. Their distorting the meaning of repentance in the Qur'an to mean recanting love and support of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân, and loving and supporting 'Ali only

With regard to the verse: ﴾So forgive those who repent and follow Your way﴿ *(Qur'an 40: 7)*, the interpretation according to them came in three reports:

1) 'So forgive those who repent' means those who repent from having supported and loved Abu Bakr, 'Umar and the Umayyads.

2) 'So forgive those who repent' means those who have repented from supporting and loving the three evil idols (meaning Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân) and the Umayyads, while 'and follow Your way' refers to the love and support of 'Ali.

3) 'So forgive those who repent' means those who repent from supporting and loving these three and the Umayyads, while 'and follow Your way', refers to Amir al-Mu'mineen ('Ali).[865]

All three reports are attributed to Abu Ja'far Muhammad al-Bâqir, but his knowledge and religious commitment prove that this cannot be true.[866]

These are just a few of their many false interpretations. Their sources for Qur'an interpretation are mostly based on this esoteric methodology of interpretation, which they adopted from Abu al-Khaṭṭâb, Jâbir al-Ja'fi, al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed and other extremists. It may be noted that in the fifth century AH, their experts in Qur'an interpretation tried to correct that extreme approach of esoteric interpretation. Their prominent shaykh, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭoosi (d. 460 AH) wrote a book of Qur'an interpretation in which he tried to eliminate or reduce the obvious exaggeration found in the commentary of al-Qummi and al-

'Ayyâshi and in *Uṣool al-Kâfi* and other books. Even though he defended the fundamentals of his sect and affirmed their innovated principles, he did not sink to the level to which al-Qummi and those who were influenced by him sank. Similar to aṭ-Ṭoosi in this methodology was al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭubrusi, in *Majma' al-Bayân*. Ibn Taymiyah referred to that when he said: "Aṭ-Ṭoosi, and those who are like him in their Quran interpretation, drew upon the commentaries of Ahl as-Sunnah; there is no useful knowledge in their commentary that was not taken from the commentaries of Ahl as-Sunnah."[867]

3.6. The attitude of the Imami Shia towards the noble Companions

The attitude of the Râfiḍi Shia towards the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) is one of enmity, hatred, resentment and grudges. That is clear from the extensive criticism of the Companions that fills their books, both classical and contemporary. For example, they believe that all but a few of the Companions became disbelievers and apostates; this is mentioned clearly in reports included in what they consider to be the soundest and most trustworthy of their books. Al-Kulayni narrated from Abu Ja'far that he said: "The people all became apostates after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) except three." The narrator said: "Who are those three?" He said: "Al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad, Abu Dharr al-Ghifâri and Salmân al-Fârisi (may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon them)." Then he mentioned a few other people and said: "These are the ones who were tested and refused to swear allegiance until 'Ali was brought and swore allegiance reluctantly to Abu Bakr."[868]

Ni'matullah al-Jazâ'iri said: "The Imamis believe in a clear and unambiguous instruction from the Prophet (ﷺ) that 'Ali was to be his successor, and they regard the Companions as disbelievers and

impugn them. According to them, the imamate went to Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq and after him, to his children the infallible ones, upon whom be peace. The author of this book is one of this group, and it (that group) is the one that will be saved inshallah."[869]

The Râfiḍi Shias' accusations against the Companions do not end with this belief that they became disbelievers and apostates. They believe that they are the worst of Allah's creation and that belief in Allah and His Messenger cannot be sound except by disavowing them, especially the three caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân, and some of the Mothers of the Believers.[870]

Muhammad Bâqir al-Majlisi said: "Our belief concerning disavowal is that we disavow the four idols: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and Mu'âwiyah; and the four women: 'Â'ishah, Ḥafṣah, Hind and Umm al-Ḥakam; and all their supporters and followers. They are the worst of Allah's creation on the face of the earth, and belief in Allah and His Messenger and the Imams cannot be complete except by disavowal of their enemies."[871]

Their hatred towards the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) has gone so far that they regard it as permissible to curse them; in fact, they seek to draw close to Allah by means of that in ways that cannot be described. Mullah Kadhim narrated from Abu Ḥamzah ath-Thamâli — in a fabrication attributed to Zayn al-'Âbideen (may Allah have mercy on him) — that he said: "Whoever curses al-Jibt waṭ-ṭâghoot [meaning Abu Bakr and 'Umar] once, Allah (ﷻ) will record for him seventy million good deeds, erase from him seventy million bad deeds and raise him in status by seventy million degrees. Whoever curses them once in the evening will have the same recorded for him. Our master 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn passed away, so I entered upon our master Abu Ja'far Muhammad al-Bâqir, and said: 'O our master, a hadith that I heard from your father.' He said: 'Tell me, O Thamâli.' I repeated the hadith to him, and he said: 'Yes, O

Thamâli, do you want me to give you more?' I said: 'Of course, O my master.' He said: 'Whoever curses them once every morning will not have any sin recorded for him during that day until evening comes, and whoever curses them once in the evening will not have any sin recorded for him during that night until morning comes.'"[872]

One of their famous supplications is one called 'the supplication of the two idols of Quraysh' (meaning Abu Bakr and 'Umar), which is narrated in the books of remembrances. They attribute this supplication wrongly and falsely to 'Ali (ﷺ), and it is more than a page and a half long. In it are the words: "O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, and curse the two idols of Quraysh and their two Jibts and their two Ṭâghoots and their two lies and their two daughters, who went against Your command, denied Your revelation, denied Your blessings, disobeyed Your Messenger, altered Your religion and distorted Your book..." and at the end: "O Allah, curse them in secret and openly, an eternal, everlasting, unceasing and never-ending curse, a curse that has a beginning but does not have an end, for them and their helpers and supporters, those who love them and take them as friends, those who submit to them and are inclined towards them, those who defend them, accept their words and believe what they say. (Say four times:) O Allah, punish them with a punishment that the people of hell pray not be punished in that way. Âmeen, O Lord of the Worlds."[873]

This supplication is encouraged among them to the extent that they narrated reports concerning its virtue that they attribute to Ibn 'Abbâs. They claim that he said: "'Ali (ﷺ) used to recite this supplication in his prayers, and he said: 'The one who recites it is like one who shot an arrow with the Prophet (ﷺ) at Badr, Uḥud and Ḥunayn, one million arrows.'"[874] Hence their scholars paid a great deal of attention to this supplication, to the extent that Agha Barzak at-Tahrâni stated that ten books were written commenting on it.[875]

This is what is mentioned in their ancient books and on the lips of their earlier scholars. With regard to their contemporary scholars, they believe the same as their predecessors and adhere to it. Their venerated imam and 'Grand Ayatollah' Khomeini writes the following in his book *Kashf al-Asrâr*:

— "We have nothing to do with these two shaykhs [Abu Bakr and 'Umar] and what they did of actions contrary to the Qur'an, toying with the rulings of Allah and what they deemed to be ḥalâl or ḥarâm on the basis of their own views, and what they did of injustice against Fâṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) and against her children. But we should point out their ignorance of the rulings of Allah and of Islam."[876]

— Concerning the two shaykhs [Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them)]: "Here we find ourselves forced to quote examples of their clearly going against the Qur'an to prove that they were against it."[877]

— Accusing them of distorting the Qur'an: "Allah mentioned eight categories of people who are entitled to a share of zakâh, but Abu Bakr omitted one of these groups on the basis of advice from 'Umar, and the Muslims did not say anything."[878]

— "In fact, they did not give proper respect to the Messenger, who had striven hard and borne calamities in order to guide them, and when he closed his eyes (died), the words of the son of al-Khaṭṭâb, which were based on fabrication and which stemmed from deeds of disbelief and heresy, were ringing in his ears."[879]

There are contemporary voices, such as al-Khunayzi, Aḥmad Mughniyah, ar-Rifâ'i and Muhammad Jawâd Mughniyah, who call for rapprochement between the Shia and Ahl as-Sunnah and who claim to respect the Companions. They should state their view openly by praising the Companions in the midst of the Shia, they should

strive to cleanse the Shiite legacy of everything that is contrary to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, and they should stand up to the contemporary Shiite shaykhs who are still jabbering about these misguided notions. They should not ignore what is mentioned in their books, both classical and contemporary, and what is taking place in real life among their common folk and shaykhs alike. They should be sincere and not contradict themselves, and only then we might accept what they say.[880]

The belief of the Râfiḍi Shia about the Companions is to be found in the reference books on which their madh-hab is based. There is slander, impugning, reviling and foul talk that people with dignity and religious commitment would refrain from uttering towards the worst disbelievers. Yet we see that the Râfiḍi Shia are happy with these words that they speak against the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his successors (caliphs), advisors and in-laws, and they regard this as a religious duty for which they hope for the greatest reward from Allah. In fact, if the Muslim ponders how misguided these people are, he will realise two things:

(a) He will realise the greatness of Allah's blessing, kindness and generosity due to the fact that He has saved him from this misguidance; this is something that requires gratitude to Allah.

(b) He will learn a lesson about the extent of these people's deviation and misguidance that anyone with the slightest amount of reason would realise, such as their seeking to draw close to Allah by cursing Abu Bakr and 'Umar morning and evening, and their claims that the one who curses them once will not have any sin recorded for him during that day. All the rational people of this Ummah, and indeed those of religions of divine origin, would realise clearly, on the basis of what they know of the religion of Allah (ﷻ), that Allah (ﷻ) never asked any nation to draw close to Him by means of cursing any of the disbelievers,

even if they were the worst of disbelievers. Moreover, He does not ask them to draw close to Him by cursing Iblees, the accursed who was cast out from His mercy, morning and evening, in a specific wording to draw close to Allah as the Râfiḍi Shia seek to draw close to Him by cursing Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

Rather, I[881] do not know, after reading and examining the books of the Râfiḍis themselves, that they contain any supplication, specific or otherwise, which curses Abu Jahl, Umayyah ibn Khalaf or al-Waleed ibn al-Mugheerah, who were the worst disbelievers among the people and the most vehement in their rejection of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), or even any curses directed against Iblees, while at the same time their books are filled with reports cursing Abu Bakr and 'Umar, as in the 'supplication of the two idols of Quraysh' and others. This is a clear sign to any rational person of the extent of misguidance a person can reach if he turns away from the path of Allah (ﷻ) and follows whims and desires and innovations. His evil deeds will be made attractive to him until he no longer recognises what is good and what is bad and cannot distinguish between truth and falsehood; instead he sinks in darkness and lives intoxicated by the impact of whims and desires. This is what Allah (ﷻ) told us in His Book when He described these type of people, saying: ﴾Is he, then, to whom the evil of his deeds is made fair-seeming, so that he considers it as good [equal to one who is rightly guided]? Verily, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills.﴿ *(Qur'an 35: 8)*

﴾Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds.﴿ *(Qur'an 18: 104)*

﴾Say [O Muhammad] whoever is in error, the Most Gracious

[Allah] will extend [the rope] to him, until, when they see that which they were promised, either the torment or the Hour, they will come to know who is worst in position, and who is weaker in forces.﴿ *(Qur'an 19: 75)*

3.6.1. Examples of the unpredictable way in which the Râfiḍi Shia interpret these verses to attempt to prove the alleged apostasy of the Companions, and a refutation of their falsehood

3.6.1.a. The verse in Âl 'Imrân

﴾You did indeed wish for death [Ash-Shahâdah — martyrdom] before you met it. Now you have seen it openly with your own eyes. Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed [many] Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels [as disbelievers]? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 143-144)*

The Râfiḍi Shia quote this passage from Allah's noble Book, claiming that it clearly refers to the Companions' turning back on their heels after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); they say that this includes the vast majority of the Companions and that very few of them remained steadfast. The small group whom the Râfiḍi Shia believe remained steadfast are 'those who are grateful', and they cannot be more than a few because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾But few of My slaves are grateful﴿ *(Qur'an 34: 13)*. Their conclusion is that these verses, which speak of the Companions who turned on their heels, clearly refer to the Companions who lived with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in Madinah and also refer to the Companions turning on their heels straight after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), without any time elapsing.[882] They twisted the meaning of these verses and

applied them to what happened with bay'at as-Saqeefah, when the noble Companions elected Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (ﷺ) as caliph. The response to these serious lies is as follows:

At-Ṭabari narrated in his hadith, with his chain of narration from aḍ-Ḍaḥḥâk, that the latter said concerning the verse ﴾Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed [many] Messengers have passed away before him﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 144)*: "People whose faith was shaky and the hypocrites said, on the day when the people fled and deserted the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) (at Uḥud), when he was wounded above his eyebrow and his tooth was broken: 'Muhammad has been killed; go back to your former religion.' That is why Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels [as disbelievers]?﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 144).*"[883]

It is also narrated that Ibn Jurayj said: "People with doubts, shaky faith and hypocrisy in their hearts said, when the people fled and deserted the Prophet (ﷺ): 'Muhammad has been killed; go back to your former religion.' Then this verse was revealed."[884] What is meant by 'turning back on (one's) heels' in this verse is what the hypocrites said when the rumour spread among the people that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had been killed; they said: "Go back to your former religion."

This verse is not speaking about those who apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), even though it is proof against them. If it was about them, this would provide further proof that the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) had nothing to do with the apostates, because they are the ones who fought them. Allah (ﷻ) caused His religion to prevail at their hands, and He caused the apostates to be defeated by means of the Companions' fighting them; some of them came back to Islam, and some died in a state of apostasy, and the virtue of Abu Bakr was demonstrated by his fighting them.[885] Because of this, 'Ali (ﷺ) used to say that the words of Allah (ﷻ),

﴾And Allah will give reward to those who are grateful﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 144)*, referred to those who remained steadfast in their religion: Abu Bakr and his companions.[886] He also used to say that Abu Bakr was foremost among those who were grateful and those who were beloved by Allah (ﷻ).[887]

The battle of Uḥud is a special case, hence the verses of Soorat Âl 'Imrân came within the context of the unique circumstances of this battle. To use this verse to analyze events such as the oath of allegiance in Saqeefah or the Battle of the Camel is very strange and inconsistent, and it has nothing to do with academic methodology. This verse is regarded as one of the greatest signs of the deep faith and wisdom of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and of his relentless efforts in defending the religion of Allah (ﷻ). The best testimony to that is his steadfast attitude on the day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, the day when he stood firm and addressed the people despite the grief and weakness that he felt at the loss of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

He said: "Allah (ﷻ) says ﴾Verily, you [O Muhammad] will die, and verily, they [too] will die﴿ *(Qur'an 39: 30)* and ﴾Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed [many] Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels [as disbelievers]? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 144)*. Whoever used to worship Allah (ﷻ), verily Allah is Ever-Living and will never die; whoever used to worship Muhammad, verily Muhammad has died."[888]

His strict stance against those who turned on their heels, replacing faith with disbelief by following false prophets like Musaylimah, Sajjâḥ, Ṭulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid, al-Aswad al-'Ansi and their ilk, and those who said, "We will not pray and we will not pay zakâh," and dismissed the obligations of Islam on the basis of

their whims and desires, is the most brilliant example of the greatness of Abu Bakr and the Companions and their devotion to Islam.[889] 'Ali (ﷺ) stood beside the Rightly Guided Caliph Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (ﷺ) in the jihad against the apostates and those who withheld zakâh. As for at-Teejâni, Sharaf ad-Deen al-Musawi and other leading scholars of the Twelver Shia, they are still waffling over the issue of those who withheld zakâh, trying to justify their stance and accusing Abu Bakr and the Companions of falsehood and apostasy. What extreme misguidance these people are uttering when they impugn the Companions of the Messenger of Allah and regard those who strove for the sake of Allah in support of this religion as symbols of disbelief, apostasy and hypocrisy.

It is not surprising to learn the extent of the respect that Imam Ja'far ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib had for Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq. Al-Irbili narrated in *Kashf al-Ghummah fi Ma'rifat al-A'immah* from 'Urwah ibn Abdullah that he said: "I asked Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali about adorning swords, and he said: 'There is nothing wrong with it; Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (ﷺ) adorned his sword.' I said: 'Do you say "aṣ-Ṣiddeeq"?' He jumped up, turned to face towards the qiblah and said: 'Yes, aṣ-Ṣiddeeq. Whoever does not call him aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, may Allah never accept from him anything he says in this world or in the hereafter as true.'"[890] May Allah have mercy on Imam Abu Ja'far, and may Allah bless his words that were kept away in the books of the past and never recognised by those people today.[891]

3.6.1.b. The verse in Soorat al-Mâ'idah

Some of these fanatics who insist that the Companions became apostates and turned on their heels quote as evidence the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion [Islam], Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the

believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 54)*

This verse, which is quoted as evidence by the Twelver Shiite scholars to indicate that the Companions apostatised and turned on their heels,[892] is the best evidence of the greatness of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and their striving to defend Islam; it is not evidence of their apostasy and turning on their heels. Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated, with his chain of narration from 'Ali (ﷺ), that he said concerning the verse ﴾Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 54)* that the people referred to are Abu Bakr and his companions. It was narrated that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri said: "This, by Allah, refers to Abu Bakr and his companions." It was narrated that aḍ-Ḍaḥḥâk said: "It is Abu Bakr and his companions, until he brought them back to Islam." This was also the view of Qatâdah, Ibn Jurayj and other leading scholars of Qur'an interpretation.[893]

This verse speaks of the qualities of the generation and the people of great faith by means of whom victory will be attained; they will attain honour and glory while the apostates will be humiliated, and their plots will backfire on them. This meaning is obvious to everyone who reads authentic books of history and sees the greatness of the Companions, foremost among whom is the Rightly Guided Caliph Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, in contrast to the humiliation and failure of the leaders of apostasy, such as Musaylimah, al-'Ansi and Sajjâḥ.[894]

The qualities mentioned in this verse are applicable most of all to Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (ﷺ) and his armies from among the Companions who fought the apostates. Allah (ﷻ) praised them in the best and most sublime way. He stated that He loves them and they

love Him, and that they are humble towards the believers but stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the way of Allah (ﷻ) and never fearing the blame of the blamers. I have discussed these qualities in my book *al-Inshirâḥ wa Raf' aḍ-Ḍeeq fi Seerat Abi Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq*;[895] whoever would like to know more may refer to it.

3.6.1.c. The verse in Soorat at-Tawbah

﴾O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah [i.e. Jihâd] you cling heavily to the earth? Are you pleased with the life of this world rather than the hereafter? But little is the enjoyment of the life of this world as compared to the hereafter. If you march not forth, He will punish you with a painful torment and will replace you by another people; and you cannot harm Him at all, and Allah is Able to do all things.﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 38-39)*

Some of the Râfiḍi Shiite scholars said: "This verse clearly shows that the Companions were reluctant to engage in jihad and were pleased with the life of this world despite their knowledge that its enjoyment was little, to the extent that they deserved this rebuke from Allah (ﷻ) and His threat of a painful punishment for them and their being replaced with other, sincere believers. This warning of being replaced by others is repeated in many verses, which clearly indicates that the Companions were reluctant to engage in jihad on many occasions."

In the verse: ﴾And if you turn away [from Islam and the obedience to Allah], He will exchange you for some other people and they will not be the likes of you﴿ *(Qur'an 47: 38)*, according to the author of *Thumma Ahtadaytu*: "It is well established and known that the Companions divided after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), and that they differed with one another and lit the fire of turmoil until the matter reached the level of fighting and bloody war, which caused the

decline and backwardness of the Muslims and raised the hopes of their enemies against them."[896]

The response to this Râfiḍi Shiite view is as follows: There is nothing in these two verses that undermines the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ); in these verses, Allah (ﷻ) is urging the Companions to engage in jihad. This was when the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded his Companions to go out on the campaign of Tabook to fight the Byzantines, which involved a very long and hot journey and came at a time of hardship and poverty for the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Some of them felt that it was difficult, so these verses were revealed to encourage them to go out on jihad for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and to warn them against being reluctant and slow to obey the command. The Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) responded to the command of their Lord.

Aṭ-Ṭabari said, in his commentary on the verse: ﴾O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah [i.e. Jihâd] you cling heavily to the earth?﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 38)*: "This verse contains encouragement from Allah (ﷻ) to those who believed in Him, the Companions of His Messenger, to join the campaign against the Byzantines. That was during the campaign of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to Tabook."[897] Undoubtedly these two verses contain an element of rebuke from Allah (ﷻ) to some of those who felt it too burdensome to go out for jihad, but that is definitely not applicable to the majority of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), who responded to the call of Allah and His Messenger by hastening to go out in jihad for the sake of Allah.[898] Ibn Katheer said: "This is a rebuke to those who stayed behind and did not go out with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on the campaign to Tabook."[899]

It is well known that the only Companions who stayed behind and failed to go out with the Prophet (ﷺ) on the campaign to Tabook

were those who had legitimate excuses, except for three people, as is indicated by the well-known hadith of Ka'b ibn Mâlik that appears in Bukhari and Muslim.[900] Those three people were Ka'b ibn Mâlik, Hilâl ibn Umayyah and Marârah ibn ar-Rabee'. Yet it is proven in the Book of Allah, to which falsehood cannot come from before it or behind it,[901] that Allah (ﷻ) accepted the repentance of all of them, and He revealed these verses concerning His forgiveness of all of the Companions:

﴾Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhâjiroon [Muslim emigrants who left their homes and came to Madinah] and the Anṣâr who followed him [Muhammad] in the time of distress [Tabook expedition], after the hearts of a party of them had nearly deviated [from the Right Path], but He accepted their repentance. Certainly, He is unto them full of kindness, Most Merciful. And [He did forgive also] the three who did not join the [Tabook expedition and whose case was deferred (by the Prophet) for Allah's Decision] till for them the earth, vast as it is, was straitened and their ownselves were straitened to them, and they perceived that there is no fleeing from Allah, and no refuge but with Him. Then, He forgave them [accepted their repentance], that they might beg for His Pardon [repent (unto Him)]. Verily, Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful.﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 117-118)*

In these verses, Allah (ﷻ) states that He accepted the repentance of the Muhâjiroon and Anṣâr who followed the Messenger (ﷺ) during the campaign to Tabook, which was called the campaign of hardship, and did not stay behind despite what befell them of hardship, difficulty and poverty. Some reports describe how a group of them would share one date between them: one would suck on it and then drink some water, then another one would suck on it and then drink some water, and so on until it came to the last of them.[902] The reports also state that Allah (ﷻ) accepted the

repentance of the three who had stayed behind and did not join the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) during that campaign, after the Prophet (ﷺ) shunned them and they regretted it deeply ﴿till for them the earth, vast as it is, was straitened and their ownselves were straitened to them﴾. After that, there was no excuse for anyone to impugn the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) or criticise them for anything they might do, after Allah (ﷻ) forgave them, accepted their repentance, and praised them greatly in His Book; the Messenger (ﷺ) also praised them in his Sunnah.[903]

As for the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) fighting one another, that happened during the reign of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), and we have already looked at the causes of the differences among the Companions during the turmoil, examined the point of view of each group and established that they are innocent of all the accusations that were made against them. Their actions were based on what they thought was correct on the basis of their understanding the Qur'an and Sunnah, and no one has the right to criticise them for any of their actions or opinions.[904] We should refrain from delving too deeply into the disagreements among them and pray for mercy for them; this is the best way. May Allah be pleased with them all.[905]

3.6.1.d. The hadith about people being prevented from reaching the reservoir

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "While I was standing at the reservoir, I saw a group of my followers that were brought close to me, and I recognised them. A man (an angel) came out from between me and them and said to them: 'Come along.' I said: 'Where to?' He said: 'To hell.' I said: 'What is wrong with them?' He said: 'They turned back on their heels.' And I did not see any of them escaping except a few."[906]

He (ﷺ) also said: "I will be ahead of you at the reservoir, and whoever comes to me will drink, and whoever drinks will never be

thirsty again. Some people will come to me whom I recognise and they recognise me, but a barrier will be placed between me and them. I will say: 'My companions!' It will be said: 'You do not know what they introduced after you were gone.' And I shall say: 'Away with them, away with those who changed after I was gone.'"[907]

Some of the Shia say: "The one who examines these numerous hadiths, which the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah narrate in their collections of sound hadiths, will never have any doubt that most of the Companions changed. They apostatised after the Prophet (ﷺ) died, except for a few, and it is not possible under any circumstances to interpret these hadiths as referring to the third group, namely the hypocrites, because the text states: 'I will say, "My companions!"' and because the hypocrites did not change after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ); otherwise the hypocrites would have become believers after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ)."[908]

The answer to this specious argument is as follows: There is no dispute as to the good character of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), and there is no doubt about their sincere faith and dignity after Allah the All-Knowing confirmed their good character in His Book and His Messenger praised them in his Sunnah. The praise of Allah and His Messenger for them is the most eloquent of praise and attributes to them the best qualities, as is well known in mutawâtir reports from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ). We will discuss this below inshallah.

The Sunni commentators on hadith are agreed that the Companions are not the ones who are meant in these hadiths, and they do not imply any undermining of them. Ibn Qutaybah said, refuting the Râfiḍi Shia in their use of this hadith as evidence for the apostasy of the Companions: "How is it possible that Allah (ﷻ) would be pleased with people and praise them and mention them as an example in the Torah and Gospel, when He knew that they would

turn on their heels after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died? If they say that He did not know, this is an even worse type of disbelief."[909] Al-Khaṭṭâbi said: "None of the Companions apostatised; rather it was the hard-hearted Arabs who apostatised, those who did not lend any support to Islam. That does not undermine the status of the well-known Companions. The word that appears in the original Arabic, a diminutive form of 'my companions', is indicative of their small number."[910]

An-Nawawi said, commenting on the words "Do you know what they introduced after you were gone?" in some reports of this hadith: "The scholars differed as to what is meant here; there are several views:

(a) That what is meant is the hypocrites and apostates. It is possible that they will be gathered with those who will have bright faces and limbs (the believers), and the Prophet (ﷺ) will call them because of the sign he sees on them, but it will be said: 'These are not the ones concerning whom you were given the promise; these are the ones who changed after you were gone' — in other words, they did not die in a state of Islam as they appeared to be.

(b) That what is meant is those who lived at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), then apostatised after he was gone. The Prophet (ﷺ) will call them because of what he knew during his lifetime, which is that they were Muslims, and it will be said: 'They apostatised after you were gone.'

(c) That what is meant is those who committed acts of disobedience and major sins but who died believing in tawḥeed, and followers of innovations that did not take them beyond the pale of Islam. Based on this view, it is not

> certain that those who are prevented from reaching the reservoir will end up in hell. It is possible that they will be prevented from reaching the reservoir as a punishment, then Allah (ﷻ) will have mercy on them and admit them to paradise with no further punishment."[911]

These or similar views were narrated by al-Qurṭubi and Ibn Ḥajar (may Allah have mercy on them).[912]

It is possible that those who are prevented from reaching the reservoir will belong to all the groups mentioned above, since the reports may be interpreted in all three ways. In some reports, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I will say 'My companions (in the diminutive form)';" in other reports, he (ﷺ) said: "People will be taken before they reach me, and I will say: 'O my Lord, they belong to me and my Ummah;'" and in yet other reports he (ﷺ) said: "Some people will come to me whom I recognise, and they will recognise me."[913] The apparent meaning is that the ones who are prevented are not one group, and this is reasonable, because in Islam punishments are according to sins, so one punishment may be applied to all those who deserve it of those who committed that particular sin.[914]

Even though the Prophet (ﷺ) explained that the reason for being kept away from the reservoir is apostasy, as in the words 'they apostatised,' or introducing innovations into Islam, as in the words, "you do not know what they introduced after you were gone,"[915] what this implies is that everyone who apostatised from Islam, whether he was one of the Bedouin who apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) or those who came after that, would be prevented from reaching the reservoir, and included with them will be those who introduced new things into the religion, namely the innovators. This is the view of some scholars. Ibn 'Abdul-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Everyone who introduces innovation into the religion will be among those who are kept away from the reservoir,

such as the Kharijites, Râfiḍis and all followers of whims and desires. The same applies to those evildoers who go to extremes in injustice and denying people's rights, and those who commit major sins openly. For all of these people, there is the fear that they may be among those who are meant in this report. And Allah (ﷻ) knows best."[916]

Al-Qurṭubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *at-Tadhkirah*: "Our scholars (may Allah have mercy on them all) say that everyone who apostatises from the religion of Allah, or introduces into it something with which He is not pleased and which He has not ordained,[917] will be among those who are kept far away from the reservoir, and those who are kept farthest away will be those who went against the main body of the Muslims and split from their way, such as the Kharijites and Râfiḍis of various groups and the Mutazilites of different types. All of these people changed their religion."[918]

Once this is established, the innocence of all the Companions of all that the Shia accused them of becomes apparent. Being prevented from reaching the reservoir is because of apostasy and introducing innovations into Islam, and the Companions are the most unlikely of all people to have done anything of that nature; on the contrary, they were the enemies of the apostates and fought them in the most difficult and critical circumstances after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). According to the report narrated by aṭ-Ṭabari in his book of history, with his chain of narration from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr from his father: "Arabs from every tribe apostatised, whether it was the entire tribe or some individuals of the tribe. Hypocrisy became apparent, the hopes of the Jews and Christians were raised, and the Muslims were like sheep on a rainy winter night because of the loss of their Prophet (ﷺ) and because of their small number and the great number of their enemies."[919]

Despite all that, the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) confronted these apostates, fought them strongly and stood up to them until Allah (ﷻ) caused them to prevail over them. Some of these apostates came back to Islam, and some were killed, and the glory, strength and respect of Islam were restored at the hands of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Moreover, the Companions were those who most strongly denounced the people of innovation; this is why innovations did not become strong until after their era came to an end. When some innovations began to appear during their era, they condemned them and disavowed the innovations and those who introduced them. It was narrated that Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) said to the one who told him what the Qadaris were saying: "If you meet these people, tell them that Ibn 'Umar has nothing to do with them, and they have nothing to do with him" — three times.[920] Al-Baghawi said, noting that there was consensus among the Companions and all the early generations (the pious predecessors) on opposing those who introduced innovations, that this was the way of the Companions, *Tâbi'oon and their followers*, and the Sunni scholars; they were all agreed on opposing and shunning the people of innovation.[921]

This noble attitude of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) towards the apostates and those who introduced innovation is among the greatest and clearest testimony of the sincerity of their religious commitment, the strength of their faith, the degree of their efforts for the sake of Islam and their struggle against its enemies after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) supported the Sunnah through them and suppressed innovations, a fact which highlights the lies of the Râfiḍis who accused them of apostasy and introducing innovations into the religion and suggested that that they will be kept away from the reservoir of the Prophet (ﷺ). In reality, the Companions will be the most deserving of all people to come to the reservoir of their Prophet (ﷺ) because of their good

companionship towards him during his lifetime and their continued support of Islam after his death.

This does not contradict the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "Some of those who accompanied me will come to me at the reservoir, and when I see them and they come close to me, they will be taken away before they reach me."[922] These are people who were Muslim at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ); many of the Arab tribes apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), but as far he (ﷺ) knew, they accompanied him, because when he died they were still following his religion. Hence it will be said to him: "You do not know what they introduced after you were gone." According to other reports, it will be said: "You have no knowledge of what they introduced after you were gone; they apostatised and turned on their heels."[923]

It seems that this applies to those who apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). What do the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) — who supported Islam in the best manner after their Prophet was gone, fought the apostates, strove in jihad against the disbelievers and hypocrites, then conquered many lands until the religion of Allah spread to many regions — have to do with these traitors? According to Ahl as-Sunnah, these apostates are not considered Companions at all because a Companion, as defined by the scholars, is one who met the Prophet (ﷺ), believing in him, and died as a Muslim.[924]

With regard to the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), "I do not think any of them will be saved from it (hell) except a few,"[925] and the Râfiḍi Shia's quoting them as evidence for regarding all of the Companions as disbelievers except for a few of them, the evidence is in fact against them, because the pronoun in the Arabic word for 'of them' refers to those people who will approach the reservoir then be turned away from it, meaning that only a few from them will be saved. This is clear from the context of the hadith because it says:

"While I was standing at the reservoir, I saw a group of my followers that were brought close to me, and I recognised them. A man (an angel) came out from between me and them and said to them: 'Come along.' I said: 'Where to?' He said: 'To hell.' I said: 'What is wrong with them?' He said: 'They turned back on their heels.' And I did not see any of them escaping except a few."[926]

There is no mention of the Companions in this hadith; it simply mentions a group of people who will be prevented from reaching the reservoir, and none of them will reach it except a few.[927] Ibn Ḥajar said, commenting on the words, "I did not see any of them escaping except a few" in this hadith: "This refers to those who will approach the reservoir and almost reach it, then will be turned away, *which means that none of them will reach it* except a few. Thus it becomes clear that the Shia's argument on the basis of this hadith is flawed, and the Companions are innocent of what they are accused of."[928]

3.6.2. The dignity and good character of the Companions (ﷺ)

The definition of good character boils down to one idea, which is a quality in a person that makes him pious and dignified. This can only be attained by doing what is enjoined, refraining from what is forbidden and keeping away from anything that undermines dignity. To achieve this, a person must be Muslim, adult, of sound mind and free of evildoing. This standard was never reached by anyone as it was reached by the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). All of them (may Allah be pleased with them) met the description of dignity and good character.[929]

What this means in the context of their narration of hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is that they refrained from telling deliberate lies or distorting what was narrated. Al-'Allâmah ad-

Dahlawi said: "We have examined the biographies of all the Companions, and we found that they all believed that telling a lie about the Prophet (ﷺ) was the worst of sins. They refrained from it, taking all precautions to avoid it, as is clear to anyone who studies their biographies."[930]

There is abundant evidence in the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) of the good character of the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), and there is no room for any doubts about their dignity and good character. Every hadith with an intact chain of narration extending from the one who narrated it to the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot be binding unless the good character of the narrators is proven. All the narrators must be examined, with the exception of the Companion who narrated it from the Prophet (ﷺ), because the sound character of the Companions is well established. Allah (ﷻ) confirmed their good character and told us about their purity and the fact that He chose them, as is clearly stated in the noble Qur'an, about which Allah says: ﴾Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it.﴿ *(Qur'an 41: 42)*[931]

(a) Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Thus We have made you [true Muslims — real believers of Islamic Monotheism, true followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah (legal ways)], a just [and the best] nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger [Muhammad] be a witness over you.﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 143)*

This verse proves the good character and dignity of the Companions (ﷺ). The word that is translated here as 'just' and 'best' refers to people of dignity and good character, because they are the ones who are addressed directly in this verse.[932]

(b) Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾You [true believers in Islamic Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin *Al-Ma'roof* [i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained] and forbid *Al-*

Munkar [polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden], and you believe in Allah.❵ *(Qur'an 3: 110)*

The evidence in this verse for the good character of the Companions (ﷺ) is that they established the fact that this Ummah is better than all nations that came before it, and those who most deserve to be included in this description are those who were addressed directly where and when these words were revealed, namely the noble Companions (ﷺ). This implies that they are people of good character and dignity in all situations; in all their affairs, they adhere to the teachings of Islam and do not go against them. It is very unlikely that Allah (ﷻ) would describe them as the best nation if they were not people of good character and righteousness. Is there anyone but them who could be described as the best?[933]

(c) Allah (ﷻ) says: ❴And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhâjiroon and the Anṣâr and also those who followed them exactly [in faith]. Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow [paradise], to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.❵ *(Qur'an 9: 100)*

The evidence in this verse for their good character is that Allah (ﷻ) states that He is pleased with them. Allah (ﷻ) does not affirm that He is pleased with anyone except those who deserve it, and no one deserves it except one who is upright and of good character in all his affairs and religious commitment. How could one whom Allah (ﷻ) praises in this manner not be of good character? When sound character can be established by the testimony of two people, how can the good character of the best of people not be confirmed by this praise when it comes from the Lord of the Worlds?[934]

(d) Allah (ﷻ) says: ❴Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate

[in prayer], seeking Bounty from Allah and [His] Good Pleasure. The mark of them [i.e. of their Faith] is on their faces [foreheads] from the traces of prostration [during prayers]. This is their description in the Tawrât [Torah]. But their description in the Injeel [Gospel] is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward [i.e. paradise].› *(Qur'an 48: 29)*

This description that Allah (ﷻ) gives them in His Book and this praise that He bestows upon them leaves no room for any doubt about the sound character of the Companions. Al-Qurṭubi said, commenting on this verse: "All of the Companions are of good character, close friends and chosen ones of Allah (ﷻ) and the best of His creation after His Prophets and Messengers. A small group of insignificant people were of the view that the Companions were like other people, so it was essential to research them in order to establish their dignity and good character. Some of these people differentiated between the Companions' situation at the beginning of Islam and later on, saying: 'They were all of good character at that time (at the beginning), then they changed later on, and there appeared among them war and bloodshed; so it is essential to research and examine.' This idea is to be rejected, because the best and most virtuous of the Companions, such as 'Ali, Ṭalḥh, az-Zubayr and others (may Allah be pleased with them), are among those whom Allah praised and was pleased with, and they were pleased with Him. He promised them paradise in the words: ‹Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward [i.e. paradise]› *(Qur'an*

48: 29), especially the ten who will definitely enter paradise according to the statements of the Messenger (ﷺ). Even though these Companions had prior knowledge of a great deal of turmoil and events that would take place among them after the death of their Prophet, because he told them about it, that does not affect their status and virtue because their involvement in these events was based on their own ijtihâd and what they thought was right."[935]

(e) Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾[And there is also a share in this booty] for the poor emigrants, who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Bounties from Allah and to please Him, and helping Allah [i.e. helping His religion] and His Messenger [Muhammad]. Such are indeed the truthful [to what they say]; And those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given [from the booty of Banu an-Naḍeer], and give them [emigrants] preference over themselves, even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.﴿ *(Qur'an 59: 8-9)*

The truthful are the Muhâjiroon, and the successful are the Anṣâr. This is how Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq interpreted these two words from these verses, as he said in his speech on the day of bay'at as-Saqeefah, addressing the Anṣâr: "Allah has called us the truthful, and He has called you the successful, and He has enjoined you to be where we are, as He says: ﴾O you who believe! Fear Allah, and be with those who are true [in words and deeds].﴿ *(Qur'an 9: 119)*

These praiseworthy attributes that are mentioned in these two verses were all achieved by the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They had these characteristics, hence the Muhâjireen were described as the truthful, and those who supported and helped them, giving them precedence

over themselves, were described as the successful. These verses clearly point to the good character of the Companions, so their good character is established and proven on the basis of the text of the noble Qur'an.[936]

With regard to evidence from the Sunnah for the good character of the Companions, there are numerous hadiths in which the Prophet (ﷺ) praised them for their good character. For example:

(a) It was narrated by Bukhari and Muslim in sound hadiths from Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Let the one who is present convey to the one who is absent."[937] The evidence for their good character in this hadith is that these words were uttered by the Prophet (ﷺ) to the greatest gathering of the Companions during the Farewell Pilgrimage. This is one of the greatest affirmations of their good character because he asked them, without exception, to convey what they heard from him to those who were not present at that gathering.[938] Concerning the words "Let the one who is present convey to the one who is absent," Ibn Ḥibbân said: "This is the greatest evidence that the Companions were all of good character, and there is no one among them who is of questionable character or is to be regarded as a weak narrator, because if there had been anyone among them who was not of good character, the Prophet (ﷺ) would have excluded him and said, 'Let so-and-so convey to those who are absent.' The fact that he included all of them in this injunction to convey to those who came after them proves that they were all of good character, and that is sufficient honour for those whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) regarded as such."[939]

(b) Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him), that the latter said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'Do not revile my Companions, for if you were to give the equivalent of Uḥud in gold, it would not amount to a *mudd* (about what one's two hands can scoop up) of one of them,

or half of that.'"[940] The evidence for the good character of the Companions in this hadith is that describing them as not being of good character is disparaging them, especially since he (ﷺ) forbade some of those who met him and accompanied him to hurt those who were senior to them because of their efforts in supporting Islam. This applies even more to those who come after the Companions with regard to all the Companions.[941] We know that all the Companions are of good character because Allah has described them as such and praised them, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) also praised them. There is no need for confirmation of their good character by anyone else.[942]

Even if their good character was not mentioned in the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), people of sound mind and good hearts would confirm their good character on the basis of the mutawâtir reports from them that tell of their great deeds and efforts to support the religion of Allah (ﷻ). They did whatever they could to support the truth, raise its banner, lay its foundations and propagate its rulings throughout the land (may Allah be pleased with them all).

What is meant by good character here is not avoidance of falling into sin, because that is only for one who is infallible.[943] Ibn al-Anbâri said: "Saying that they were of good character does not mean affirming that they were infallible or that it was impossible for them to sin; rather what is meant is that their reports may be accepted without needing to establish or prove their being of good character, unless there is proof of something to undermine their good character or dignity, but nothing of the sort was ever proven, praise be to Allah (ﷻ). So we shall continue to believe that they remained as they were at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), unless the opposite is proven."[944]

Consensus on their good character: Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah are unanimously agreed that all the Companions were of

good character without exception, whether they were involved in turmoil (fitnah) or not; Ahl as-Sunnah do not differentiate between them. All of them are of good character, and we think positively of them because of the honour that Allah bestowed upon them of accompanying His Prophet (ﷺ), their great efforts in supporting the Messenger (ﷺ) by migrating to join him and striving alongside him in jihad, and their adhering to the commands of Islam and heeding its limits. Therefore their testimony and reports are accepted without needing to establish their good character, according to the consensus of those whose view is credible. Consensus on their good character was narrated by a great number of scholars; here are some examples:

(a) Al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after mentioning evidence from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger that points to the good character of all the Companions: "This is the view of all the scholars and those jurists whose views are credible."[945]

(b) Abu 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Even though we need not examine the character of the Companions, because all the followers of truth among the Muslims — Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah — are agreed that they are of good character, we still have to find out about their names and who they are."[946]

(c) Imam al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwayni (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated that there was consensus on their good character, and he explained the reason for that consensus as follows: "Perhaps the reason for it is that they are the ones who transmitted Islam (to the next generation), and if we had to be sceptical about their reports, then Islam would have been limited to the time of the Messenger (ﷺ) and would not have continued to other eras."[947]

(d) Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâḥ stated that the consensus on the good character of the Companions was a unique quality that distinguished them from

others. He said: "All of the Companions have a special quality, which is that the good character of any one of them is not to be questioned; it is to be taken for granted because they were all of good character according to the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah and the consensus of those whose views are credible." He also said: "The Ummah is unanimously agreed on the good character of all the Companions, including those who got involved in fitnah. This is the consensus of the scholars whose view is credible; they think positively of them because they are the ones who transmitted Islam and Sharia."[948] And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

(e) Imam an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after mentioning that the wars that occurred among them and the stances they adopted were based on what they thought was right, and that all of them are excused for what happened among them: "Hence the people of the straight path and those who are credible agreed that their testimony and reports are to be accepted and that they are of good character, may Allah be pleased with them."[949] He said in *at-Taqreeb*: "All the Companions are of good character and credible, including those who were involved in the fitnah and those who were not, according to the consensus of those whose views are credible."[950]

(f) Al-Ḥâfidh Ibn Katheer said: "All of the Companions are of good character according to Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, because of the praise bestowed upon them by Allah in His holy Book and because of what the Sunnah says in praise of them in all their attitudes, deeds, sacrifice of wealth and lives, striving alongside the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and seeking great reward with Allah (ﷻ)."[951]

(g) Al-'Iraqi said, commenting on *al-Alfiyyah*, after quoting some Qur'anic verses and hadiths which prove the good character of the Companions: "The entire Ummah is agreed on the credibility and good character of those who did not get involved in turmoil. With

regard to those who did get involved in the turmoil at the time of 'Uthmân, those scholars whose views are credible are also unanimously agreed on their good character, thinking positively of them and assuming that it was based on what they thought was right."[952]

(h) Al-Ḥâfidh Ibn Ḥajar stated that Ahl as-Sunnah are unanimously agreed on the good character of the Companions. He said: "Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed that all of them were of good character, and no one disagreed concerning that except weird or odd innovators."[953]

All of these blessed reports, which state that there was consensus among the leading scholars, are a clear indication and definitive proof that the good character of the Companions is something firmly established that may be taken for granted and regarded as a given. This leaves no room for anyone to doubt it, after the confirmation of their good character by Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) and the consensus of the Ummah on that.[954]

3.6.3. Obligation to love them, pray for them and ask for forgiveness for them

The belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah is that it is obligatory to love the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and to respect and honour them, regard their consensus on an issue as binding and follow their example. It is forbidden to bear grudges against any one of them, because of the honour that Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon them of accompanying His Messenger (ﷺ), engaging in jihad alongside him to support the religion of Islam, bearing patiently the persecution of the polytheists and hypocrites, migrating from their homes and leaving behind their wealth, and giving precedence to love of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) over all of that.

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾And those who came after them say: 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and

put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful'》 *(Qur'an 59: 10)*. This verse indicates that it is obligatory to love the Companions, because Allah (ﷻ) has given a share of the fay' to those who come after the Companions, as long as they persist in loving them, supporting them and praying for forgiveness for them; it indicates that the one who insults any of them or believes anything bad about them has no right to the fay'. That was narrated from Imam Mâlik and others. Mâlik said: "Whoever shows hatred towards any one of the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ) or bears any resentment towards them in his heart has no right to the fay' of the Muslims." Then he recited the verse: 《And those who came after.》 *(Qur'an 59: 10)*

In both earlier and later times, Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah understood that what was meant in the verse quoted above is a command to the later generations to offer supplication and ask for forgiveness for the earlier generation, namely the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Muslim narrated, with his chain of narration from Hishâm ibn 'Urwah, that his father said: "'Â'ishah said to me: 'O son of my sister, they were instructed to pray for forgiveness for the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), but they reviled them instead.'"[955]

Ibn Baṭṭah and others narrated that Abu Badr said: "Abdullah ibn Zayd narrated from Ṭalḥah ibn Muṭarraf from Muṣ'ab ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaṣ, who said: 'People are of three categories, two of which have passed and one of which remains, so the best you can do is to be among the category that remains.' Then he recited: 《And [it is also for] those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given [from the booty of Banu an-Nadeer], and give them [emigrants] preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And

whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful﴿ *(Qur'an 59: 9)*. He said: 'These are the Muhâjiroon, and they are a category that has passed.'

"Then he recited: ﴾And [it is also for] those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given [from the booty of Banu an-Nadeer], and give them [emigrants] preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.﴿ *(Qur'an 59: 9)* He said: 'These are the Anṣâr, and they are the second category that has passed.'

"Then he recited: ﴾And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful"﴿ *(Qur'an 59: 10)*. Two have passed, and this group remains: those who pray for forgiveness for them."[956]

No one with the slightest knowledge would doubt that the Râfiḍi Shia are excluded from this category since they do not pray for mercy for the Companions or ask for forgiveness for them. Instead they disparage them and bear grudges against them, so they are deprived of this category and status, which the Muslim is required to attain and should never go beyond, under any circumstances, until he meets his Lord.[957]

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "These verses include praise for the Muhâjireen and the Anṣâr and for those who come after them who pray for forgiveness for them and ask Allah (ﷻ) not to put in their hearts any resentment towards them. This indicates that these groups are the ones who are entitled to the fay', and there is no doubt that these Râfiḍis are excluded from these

three categories because they do not pray for forgiveness for those who came before, and their hearts harbour resentment against them. In these verses, there is praise for the Companions and for Ahl as-Sunnah who love and support them, and exclusion for the Râfiḍis from that. This proves that the Râfiḍi madh-hab is flawed."[958]

3.6.4. Prohibition in the Qur'an and Sunnah from reviling the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them)

3.6.4.a.

﴾Verily, those who annoy Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), Allah has cursed them in this world and in the hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating torment.﴿ *(Qur'an 33: 57)*

This verse is a warning, a threat of being cast away from the mercy of Allah (ﷻ) and a humiliating torment, for the one who offends Allah (ﷻ) by going against His commands, doing what He forbids and persisting in that, and annoying and offending His Messenger.[959] This includes both verbal and physical offences, such as reviling, insulting or undermining him or his religion, or anything else that may cause offence to him.[960] Among the things that cause offence to him (ﷺ) is insulting his Companions; he has told us that offending them is offending him, and that the one who offends him has offended Allah (ﷻ).[961] What offence to the Companions could be worse than reviling them? This verse contains the strongest and clearest evidence that it is ḥarâm to revile them (may Allah be pleased with them).

3.6.4.b.

﴾And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, they bear [on themselves] the crime of slander and plain sin.﴿

(Qur'an 33: 58)

This verse includes a warning against offending the believing men and women by attributing things to them that they have nothing to do with and have never done. It is the greatest lie to tell or narrate about the believing men and women things that they did not do, for the purpose of undermining and condemning them.[962] The reason this verse proves that it is ḥarâm to insult the Companions is that they are the foremost among the believers, and they were the ones who were addressed in every verse that begins with the words, ﴾O you who believe!﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 104)* or ﴾Verily, those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah — Islamic Monotheism] and do righteous deeds﴿ *(Qur'an 18: 107)*, throughout the Qur'an. This verse is indicative of the prohibition on reviling the Companions because the word 'believers' was first applied to them, and they were the foremost among the believers. Insulting them and undermining them are among the greatest offences. Whoever undermines them in that way has condemned the best of the believers for something that they did not do. If a person regards disparaging and undermining them as part of his religious practice, the warning mentioned in this verse applies to him.[963]

Ibn Katheer said, commenting on this verse: "Foremost among those who are included in this warning are those who disbelieve in Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, then the Râfiḍis who undermined the Companions, criticised them for things of which Allah (ﷻ) has declared them innocent, and described them in terms contrary to what Allah (ﷻ) has said about them. Allah (ﷻ) said that He is pleased with the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, and He praised them. Those ignorant and stupid people disparage them and undermine them; they attribute to them characteristics that they never had and deeds that they never did. In fact, they (the Râfiḍis) have a distorted view of things; they criticise those who are praised and praise those who are condemned."[964]

3.6.4.c.

﴾Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate [in prayer], seeking Bounty from Allah and [His] Good Pleasure. The mark of them [i.e. of their Faith] is on their faces [foreheads] from the traces of prostration [during prayers]. This is their description in the Tawrât [Torah]. But their description in the Injeel [Gospel] is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward [i.e. paradise].﴿ *(Qur'an 48: 29)*

The way in which this verse proves that it is ḥarâm to revile the Companions (ﷺ) is that no one reviles them except one who is enraged in his heart against them. In this verse, Allah (ﷻ) explains that it is the disbelievers who were enraged because of them, so this indicates that it is ḥarâm to condemn them or criticise them for what happened among them in such a way as to put them down.

3.6.4.d.

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (ﷺ) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Do not revile my companions. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if one of you were to spend the equivalent of Uḥud in gold, it would not amount to a mudd of one of them, or half of that.'"[965]

This hadith clearly states that it is ḥarâm to insult the Companions (ﷺ); it includes both a prohibition and a warning.[966] There are many similar hadiths as well.

Prohibition of the early generation from reviling the Companions

There are numerous texts narrated from the early generations of the Ummah, its leading scholars among the Companions, and those who came after them who followed them in truth, which defend the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and state that it is ḥarâm to revile them. They include the following:

(a) Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: "If you see a man mentioning one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in a bad way, then doubt his Islam."[967]

(b) Abu Zar'ah ar-Râzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "If you see a man undermining any of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then know that he is a heretic, because the Messenger (ﷺ) in our view is true, and the Qur'an is true; the people who conveyed this Qur'an and Sunnah were the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They seek to undermine our witnesses (meaning those who conveyed the Qur'an and Sunnah) so as to invalidate the Qur'an and Sunnah; it is more appropriate to criticise and doubt them (those who impugn the Companions), and they are heretics."[968]

(c) Imam ash-Shawkâni (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated that there was consensus among Ahl al-Bayt that it is harâm to revile the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), and this was narrated in twelve reports.[969] Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Wâḥid al-Maqdisi narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali, that he said to Jâbir al-Ja'fi: "O Jâbir, I heard that some people in Iraq are claiming that they love us, and they impugn Abu Bakr and 'Umar and claim that I am telling them to do so. Tell them from me that I disavow them before Allah (ﷻ). By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, if I were to

be appointed to a position of authority, I would seek to draw close to Allah (ﷻ) by executing them. May I never attain the intercession of Muhammad (ﷺ) if I do not seek forgiveness for them (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) and pray for mercy for them. The enemies of Allah (ﷻ) are not aware of their virtue. So tell them that I disavow them and anyone else who shuns Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them)."[970]

He also narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Abdullah ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, that he said: "I do not think that any man who reviles Abu Bakr and 'Umar will ever be guided to repent."[971]

3.6.5. Love of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and his sons for the Companions (ﷺ)

The true picture will remain, bright and clear, and all else will fade away. This picture is clarified in the most important book of the Twelver Shia, namely *Nahj al-Balâghah*. These texts are sufficient to undermine their beliefs, which are based on cursing and reviling the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and saying that they apostatised and turned on their heels after the Prophet (ﷺ) died. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali himself described the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as he saw them. He said: "I saw the Companions of Muhammad, and I have never seen anyone like them. They would wake up unkempt and dusty, having spent all night in prostration and prayer, alternating between resting their foreheads and their feet on the ground, feeling alarm due to thinking of the hereafter. It was as if there were marks between their eyes like the knees of a goat because of lengthy prostration. When Allah was remembered, their eyes would fill with tears until their garments became wet. They would sway like trees on a stormy day for fear of punishment and in hope of reward."[972]

'Ali (ﷺ) felt sad for having parted from them, and he eulogised them after their death like one who loves someone and parts from the one whom he loves. He said: "Where are the people who were called to Islam and accepted it, who read the Qur'an and applied it, who unsheathed their swords and marched in ranks to all corners of the earth with sore eyes because of weeping and empty stomachs because of fasting, with dry lips because of supplication and wan faces because of staying up at night, on whose faces was the mark of the humble? Those are my brothers who have passed away, so we have the right to yearn for them and to bite our fingers in sorrow at their loss."[973] O you who love Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), think about how he regarded the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)!

Imam 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-'Âbideen (may Allah have mercy on him) used to mention the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and pray for mercy and forgiveness for them in his prayer because of the support they gave to the master of mankind in spreading the call of tawḥeed and conveying the message of Allah (ﷻ) to His creation. He said: "O Allah, grant them Your pleasure and forgiveness, O Allah, in particular the Companions, who were good companions and strove hard to support him; they stood with him and hastened to offer refuge and protect him. They were the first to accept his call and respond to him when he presented the proof for his message. They left their wives and children to support his word; they fought their fathers and sons in support of his prophethood; they abandoned their tribes to join him, and their relatives abandoned them when they decided to be with him. O Allah, whatever they gave up was for Your sake, so be pleased with them and reward them abundantly, since they strove hard to support the truth for Your sake.

"Reward them for abandoning their homes for Your sake, for leaving a life of ease for a life of hardship, and for leaving a life of

abundance to a life of little, all in support of Your religion. O Allah, reward with the best reward those who followed them in truth and said, 'O our Lord, forgive our brothers in faith who came before us,' those who followed their example and emulated them; they never had any doubt about their deep insight and never hesitated to follow in their footsteps and follow their guidance, loving and supporting them, following their way, uniting behind them and never questioning them with regard to what they passed on to them."[974]

This is the attitude of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them) towards the Companions. It is the opposite of what is claimed by those Râfiḍi plotters and conspirators who tried to conceal themselves under the cover of support for Ahl al-Bayt and Shiism, but who were enemies of the noble Qur'an, the Sunnah and the pure Imams of Ahl al-Bayt.

3.7. Attitude of the Shia towards the Sunnah

The meaning of the word 'Sunnah' in Islamic terminology is that which was narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) of words, deeds or approval.[975] The scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah paid a great deal of attention to writing down the sound reports and made every effort to protect the Sunnah from fabrications and fabricators. They did their utmost and used the best academic methods of checking and examining texts, to the extent that we can be certain that our scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) were the first ones among all the nations of the earth to lay down rules of precise academic examination of reports. Their effort in that field is something for Muslims to be proud of and to boast about before all nations. This is the bounty of Allah, which He grants to whom He wills, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knowing.[976]

The Sunni scholars took the following steps to examine and check reports. They were able to save and protect the Sunnah from

the plots and conspiracies that were drawn up against it, and to cleanse it from all the dirt that contaminated it.[977]

3.7.1. The chain of narrators of reports

The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not doubt one another after he died, and the Tâbi'oon never hesitated to accept any hadith that was narrated by a Companion from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but this changed when fitnah arose and the wretched Abdullah ibn Saba' started preaching his evil ideas, which were based on an extreme form of Shiism that claimed that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was divine. He began to fabricate reports and insert them into the Sunnah, and the number of fabricated reports accumulated with the passage of time. At this point, the scholars among the Companions and the Tâbi'oon became very careful about the transmission of hadith, and they would not accept any report unless they knew its chain of narration and narrators and were satisfied with their trustworthiness and good character.

Ibn Sireen said, as was narrated by Imam Muslim in the introduction to his collection of sound hadiths: "They used not to ask about chains of narration, but when the fitnah occurred, they said: 'Name for us your men (in the chain of narration).'" They would find out who were followers of the Sunnah and accept their hadiths, and they would find out about who were followers of innovation and reject their hadiths. This checking began at the time of the younger Companions who were still alive at the time of fitnah.

Muslim narrated, in the introduction to his collection of sound hadiths, that Mujâhid said: "Basheer al-'Adawi came to Ibn 'Abbâs and started narrating to him, saying: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said.' Ibn 'Abbâs did not listen to his reports and did not even look at him. He said: 'O Ibn 'Abbâs, why is it that I do not see you listening to what I tell you? I am narrating to

you from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and you are not listening.' Ibn 'Abbâs said: 'At one time, if we heard a man say, "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said," we would all turn to look at him and listen to him. But when the people started to narrate a great deal, we did not accept from the people anything but that which we were familiar with.' Then when lying became widespread, the Tâbi'oon began to ask for chains of narration. Abu al-'Âliyah said: 'We used to hear hadiths from the Companions, but we would not be content until we went to them and heard it from them.' Ibn al-Mubârak said: 'The chain of narration is part of the religion. Were it not for the chain of narration, anyone could say what they wanted.' Ibn al-Mubârak also said: 'Between us and the people are the lists' — meaning chains of narration."[978]

3.7.2. Verifying hadiths

This was done by referring to the Companions, Tâbi'oon and prominent scholars in this field. It is a sign of Allah's preserving the Sunnah of His Prophet that He made the lives of some prominent Companions and scholars among them long, so that they could serve as a reference point and people could be guided through them. When the fabrication of hadiths began, the people turned to these Companions first, asking them what they knew of hadiths and seeking their advice concerning the hadiths and reports they heard. Many trips were made by the Tâbi'oon, and even some of the Companions, from one country to another for that purpose, so that they could hear proven hadiths from trustworthy narrators. Hence Jâbir ibn Abdullah travelled to Syria, and Abu Ayyoob travelled to Egypt to hear hadiths.

3.7.3. Critical examination of narrators, highlighting how truthful they were

This is a very important field, through which the scholars were able to distinguish sound from fabricated hadiths, strong from weak.

They did very well in this regard, tracing narrators and studying their lives, history and biography, what was hidden about them and what was known, never fearing the blame of the blamers.[979]

They set out guidelines and rules and applied them in order to determine whose reports were to be accepted and whose were to be rejected, whose reports were to be written down and whose reports were not to be written down. Among the most important categories of rejected reporters, whose hadiths are not to be accepted, are:

3.7.3.a. Those who tell lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

The scholars unanimously agreed that the hadith of one who tells lies about the Prophet (ﷺ) is not to be accepted. They also unanimously agreed that this is the gravest of major sins, but they differed as to whether such a person is a disbeliever or not. Some said that he is a disbeliever, and some said that he is to be executed, and they differed as to whether his repentance is acceptable or not.

3.7.3.b. Those who tell lies in their general talk, even if they do not tell lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

The scholars unanimously agree that if a person is known to have told a lie, even once, his hadith is to be rejected.

3.7.3.c. Followers of innovation and whims and desires

The scholars also agreed that no hadith can be accepted from a follower of innovation if his innovation constitutes disbelief. If his innovation does not constitute disbelief, but he regards lying as permissible, his hadiths are not accepted either. What if he follows an innovation that does not constitute disbelief and he does not regard lying as permissible — can his reports be accepted or not? Is there a differentiation between one who promotes innovation and calls others to it, and one who does not? Ibn Katheer said: "Concerning this issue, there has been a dispute from early times until more

recently. The view of the majority is that there should be differentiation between one who promotes innovation and one who does not."[980] What appears to me to be correct is that the scholars reject a narrator who follows innovation if he narrates something that supports his innovation, or if his group is known to regard lying as permissible and to fabricate hadiths in support of their whims and desires. Hence they rejected the reports of the Râfiḍis, but they would accept the report of an innovator if he and his group did not regard lying as permissible, such as 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân.[981]

3.7.3.d. Rejecting the reports of heretics and others

The scholars are agreed that the reports of the following people are to be rejected: heretics, evildoers, heedless people who do not understand what they are narrating, and anyone who does not meet the conditions of precision, good character and understanding.

The scholars of hadith established guidelines for determining what is sound, reliable and weak in categorizing hadith. They also set out guidelines for determining what is fabricated, and they mentioned the signs by which this might be known, such as poor language, unsound meanings, being contrary to the clear meaning of the Qur'an, contradicting the known facts of history at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and others.[982]

By means of these successful efforts, the Islamic religion was preserved. The foundation of the Sunnah, which is the second source of legislation, was established, and the Muslims felt reassured with regard to the hadiths of their Prophet (ﷺ). Everything alien was removed, and the distinctions between what was sound, reliable and weak were established. Allah (ﷻ) protected His religion from tampering by those who sought to corrupt it and those who were trying to insert fabricated reports, and from the plots of the heretics and the shu'oobiyyah. The Muslims reaped the harvest of this blessed and mighty effort, among the most prominent features of which were

the writing down of the Sunnah, the science of hadith, the science of examining reporters and other sciences of hadith.[983]

The attitude of the Shia towards the Sunnah, due to the Shia regarding the Companions as disbelievers

The Shiite opinion on imamate led them to regard the overwhelming majority of the Companions (ﷺ) as disbelievers. As a result of this abhorrent view, the Shia rejected almost all of the hadiths that were narrated through the Companions; they only accepted hadiths that were narrated through the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt or those whom they claimed were Shia, like Salmân al-Fârisi, 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir, Abu Dharr and al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad. They launched a relentless attack on narrators of hadith such as Abu Hurayrah, Samurah ibn Jundub, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah and others; they accuse them of fabricating, forging and lying.[984] Imam 'Abdul-Qâhir al-Baghdadi regarded the Shia as being among those who rejected the Sunnah because they refused to accept the reports of the Companions of the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ).[985]

The Shia waged war against the Sunnah, hence Ahl as-Sunnah (the Sunnis) were known exclusively by this name because they followed the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).[986] This is what was mentioned in some of the sources of Ahl as-Sunnah, but the Shia narrate from their Imams that everything is to be referred to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and that every hadith that is not in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah is invalid.[987] They also have other reports like this.[988] This means that the Shia do not deny the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); they do refer to it and regard it as parallel to the Book of Allah as the criterion and final word. However, the one who studies their texts and reports will reach the conclusion that most of their reports and views head in a direction

away from the Sunnah that is known to the Muslims, in terms of interpretation and application as well as chains of narration and texts.

The word of the Imam is like the word of Allah and His Messenger

For the Shia, the Sunnah is everything that was narrated from the 'infallible one', whether word, deed or approval.[989] The one who does not understand the nature of their madh-hab will not realise the extent to which they have drifted away from the Sunnah in this statement. The 'infallible one' refers not only to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) but also to any of those whose word they regard as equal to the word of Allah and the words of His Messenger, namely the twelve Imams. They do not differentiate in this regard between these twelve Imams and the one who does not speak of his own desire, whose speech is only a Revelation revealed[990] — the Prophet (ﷺ).[991] These Imams are not treated like others who narrated from the Prophet, whose words become binding on the basis that they are trustworthy in narration. They believe that these 'infallible ones' were appointed by Allah (ﷻ), as mentioned by Prophet, to convey the divine rulings, and that they do not speak of anything except that which comes from Allah (ﷻ).[992]

There is also no differentiation between what these twelve Imams said at the age of childhood and what they said at the age of maturity, because in the view of the Shia, they cannot err — either deliberately or accidentally or as a result of forgetfulness — at any time throughout their lives, as we have seen above in the discussion of the issue of infallibility. Hence one of their contemporary shaykhs said: "Belief in the infallibility of the Imams makes whatever they utter sound, without stipulating a condition that it should have a chain of narration going back to the Prophet (ﷺ), as is the case with Ahl as-Sunnah."[993] For them, the Sunnah is not only the Sunnah of the

Prophet; rather it is the Sunnah of the Imams, and the words of these Imams are like the words of Allah and His Messenger. They admit that this is what the Shia added to the Sunnah, saying: "The Imami Shia added everything that was said or done by the twelve Imams of words, deeds or approval, to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ)."[994]

Their view stems from two serious matters and two principles, which for them are basic to this issue. One of their contemporary shaykhs pointed out these two things when he explained that whatever the Imams said is at the same level as the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) in that it is binding and must be followed, and that whatever ruling they pass is the ruling ordained by Allah. He explained that this knowledge could be attained for them in two ways: "through inspiration like the Prophet, i.e., through revelation, or through learning it from the infallible one who came before him."[995]

They claim that the Imams are the guardians of the knowledge and revelation of Allah (ﷻ). The author of *al-Kâfi* wrote a chapter with the title: "The Imams (ﷺ) are in charge of executing the commands of Allah (ﷻ) and are the guardians of His Knowledge."[996] In this chapter, there are six reports to that effect. He wrote another chapter entitled: "The Imams inherited the knowledge of the Prophet and all the Prophets and the appointed heirs who came before them,"[997] in which there are seven such reports. In a third chapter, entitled "The Imams know all branches of knowledge that are known to the Angels, Prophets and Messengers (ﷺ),"[998] there are four reports.[999] The Râfiḍi Shia went to extremes with this issue. What we have quoted from these imaginary sources claimed by the Shia is enough; simply reading it and imagining its implications is sufficient to show how corrupt it is.

As a result of that concept of the Imams, the Râfiḍi Shia did not pay attention to the soundness of the chain of narration or study

and evaluate the narrators, as the scholars of hadith did. At the same time that they reject the collections of sound hadiths of Bukhari and Muslim and the books of the Sunnah that are authenticated and sound, they rely for their hadiths on what was narrated by al-Kulayni, whose comments on many of their beliefs we have quoted above. They regard him as one whose view is binding and sound beyond any doubt, and his book *al-Kâfi*[1000] is one of the oldest hadith books of the Shia and one of the most authentic in their view.

One of the Shia described the status of this book among them when he said: "The Imamis and the majority of Shia are agreed on the superiority of this book and on following it, trusting its reports and being content with its rulings. They unanimously agreed that it is of a supreme status and high level, and it is the main basis for all the narrations of the trustworthy reporters who are known for their precision and knowledge until today."[1001] For them, it is better than all the other books of hadith, knowing that most of what is in *al-Kâfi* — as Abu Zahrah says — are reports that ended with the Imams. We cannot say that there is any hadith with a chain of narrators that goes back all the way to the Prophet (ﷺ) or claims that these are the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), except on the basis that the words of their Imams are the same as the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) and are part of the religion of Allah (ﷻ). Most of what is narrated in *al-Kâfi* stops at aṣ-Ṣâdiq, and very little of it goes back to his father al-Bâqir. Even less goes back to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), and that which goes back to the Prophet (ﷺ) is very rare.

There is also a book called *Man la yaḥduruhu al-Faqeeh*, which was compiled by Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Bâbawayh, whom they call ash-Shaykh aṣ-Ṣadooq, one of their greatest scholars in Khorasan (d. 381 AH). Other main references of the Shia include *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkâm* and *al-Istibṣâr fima ukhtulifa min al-Akhbâr*, by Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭoosi. These Shiite

books are filled with tens of thousands of reports and hadiths which cannot be proven sound; indeed most of them are fabricated and made up,[1002] such as the reports that we have referred to previously, on which they rely to defend the idea that 'Ali (ﷺ) was more entitled to the caliphate. From the above, we know the views and beliefs of the Shia. The Shia themselves — or at least some of them — admit that in their books there are some fabricated reports, and they themselves criticise some of their narrators.

Since this is the case, the Shia should follow the advice of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) when he said: "Adhere to your religion and follow the guidance and Sunnah of your Prophet. Measure what you do not understand against the Qur'an; whatever the Qur'an approves of, adhere to it, and whatever it disapproves of, reject it."[1003] He (ﷺ) also said: "Follow the guidance of your Prophet (ﷺ), for it is the best of guidance, and follow his Sunnah, for it is the best of ways."[1004]

They should adhere to the path of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) in understanding the rulings of the noble Qur'an and the meanings of its verses. They should adhere to the apparent meaning of the noble Qur'an, understanding the verses that are general in meaning in the light of the verses that are specific and detailed. They should pay attention to what abrogates and what is abrogated, study the language of the Arabs, understand some texts in the light of others, ask about any verses that are unclear, understand the reasons for revelation and learn from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) how to respect the status of prophethood and deal with the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) in accordance with his guidance, which I have discussed in this book. Then they should examine the reports in their books on the basis of two just and precise measures: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Whatever is in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger

(ﷺ), they should accept it; whatever is contrary to them, they should reject it and warn their followers against it, especially those reports that undermine their Imams themselves, let alone Islam.

The religion of Allah is complete and perfect. Allah says: ﴾This day, I have perfected your religion for you﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 3)*. And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) conveyed all that was revealed to him and he followed the command of his Lord, Who said: ﴾O Messenger [Muhammad]! Proclaim [the Message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His Message﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 67)*.

The Prophet (ﷺ) conveyed the message clearly and eloquently, and he established proof so that there would be no excuse left for anyone. He proclaimed it openly among the Muslims, without singling out anyone to tell him alone any part of Sharia and asking him to keep it secret. Allah says: ﴾Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers. Except those who repent and do righteous deeds, and openly declare [the truth which they concealed]﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 159-160)*.

﴾And We have not sent down the Book [the Qur'an] to you [O Muhammad], except that you may explain clearly unto them those things in which they differ.﴿ *(Qur'an 16: 64)*

So the religion is complete and perfect, with nothing added or taken away or altered,[1005] not by any so-called Imam or any fictional absent one.[1006] The Prophet (ﷺ) bade farewell to this world after conveying the religion in full and explaining all of it as commanded by his Lord. He (ﷺ) said: "You have been left with something so clear that its night is like its day. No one goes astray from it after I am gone but he will be doomed."[1007] Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said:

"Muhammad (ﷺ) left us, and no bird moved its wing in the sky but he told us something about it."[1008]

3.8. Shia view of Taqiyyah

3.8.1. Shia definition of Taqiyyah

Their shaykh al-Mufeed said: "Taqiyyah is concealing the truth and one's belief in it, not speaking about one's beliefs to those who are different, and not supporting them in any matter that may cause harm in one's religious or worldly affairs."[1009] Yoosuf al-Baḥrâni, one of their senior scholars in the twelfth century AH, said: "What is meant by taqiyyah is to show agreement with those who differ from us in what they believe, out of fear."[1010] Khomeini said: "The meaning of taqiyyah is for a man to say something different than the truth or to do something contrary to the teachings of Islam, in order to protect his life, honour or wealth."[1011] These three definitions of taqiyyah, by three of the senior scholars of the Râfiḍi Shia who came at different intervals, are based on their four main principles of taqiyyah, which are:

- The meaning of taqiyyah is for a person to show to another something other than what he believes in his heart.
- Taqiyyah is to be used with those who differ, and it is very clear that all of the Muslims come under this heading.
- Taqiyyah is used with regard to what those who differ believe or follow in matters of religion.
- Taqiyyah is only to be used in the case of fear for one's religion, life or wealth.

These four guidelines form the basis of their belief in taqiyyah.[1012]

3.8.2. Status of taqiyyah among the Râfiḍi Shia

Taqiyyah is held in high esteem among them, as is indicated by numerous reports in their main reference books. Al-Kulayni and others narrated from Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq that he said: "Taqiyyah is part of my religion and the religion of my forefathers, and the one who has no taqiyyah has no faith."[1013]

It was narrated from Abu Abdullah that he said: "Nine-tenths of religion is in taqiyyah; the one who has no taqiyyah has no faith. Taqiyyah may be applied to everything except *nabeedh* (a type of drink) and wiping over the two khuffs (leather slippers)."[1014]

In *Al-Maḥâsin*, it is narrated from Ḥabeeb ibn Basheer from Abu Abdullah that he said: "No, by Allah, nothing on earth is dearer to me than taqiyyah. O Ḥabeeb, the one who has taqiyyah will be raised in status by Allah; O Ḥabeeb, the one who has no taqiyyah will be humiliated by Allah."[1015] In aṭ-Ṭoosi's *Al-Amâli*, it is narrated from Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq that he said: "He is not one of us who does not adhere to taqiyyah and preserve our dignity before the base people."[1016] In *Al-Uṣool al-Aṣliyyah* it is narrated from 'Ali ibn Muhammad that Dâwood aṣ-Ṣarmi said: "He said to me: 'O Dâwood, if I told you that the one who forsakes taqiyyah is like the one who forsakes prayer, it would be true.'"[1017]

It was narrated from Bâqir that he was asked: "Who is the most perfect of people?" He said: "The one who adheres most to taqiyyah and takes care of his brothers the most."[1018] It was also narrated that he said: "The noblest characteristic of the virtuous Imams of our sect is the use of taqiyyah."[1019]

These reports illustrate the high status of taqiyyah in their view and its importance in their religion. For the Râfiḍi Shia, taqiyyah is one of the most important fundamentals of religion; the one who has no taqiyyah has no faith, and the one who forsakes taqiyyah is like

the one who forsakes prayer. In fact, taqiyyah in their view is better than all the pillars of Islam. Taqiyyah represents nine-tenths of their religion, and all the pillars and obligatory duties of Islam represent the remaining one-tenth.[1020] The author of *al-Kâfi* narrated reports under the headings: 'Chapter on taqiyyah,'[1021] 'Chapter on concealment,'[1022] and 'Chapter on speaking openly.'[1023] Al-Majlisi quoted one hundred and nine of their reports in *Biḥâr al-Anwâr* in a chapter called 'Taqiyyah' and being kind for fear of hostility.[1024]

3.8.3. Causes of this exaggeration with regard to taqiyyah

This exaggeration with regard to taqiyyah is due to a number of things, such as:

3.8.3.a. Their view that the rulership of the first three caliphs was invalid

The Râfiḍi Shia regarded the rulership of the first three caliphs as invalid. They and those who swore allegiance to them are regarded as disbelievers, even though 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) swore allegiance to them, prayed behind them, fought in jihad alongside them, gave his daughter Umm Kulthoom in marriage to 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and had a concubine whom he received from his jihad with Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه). When he was appointed caliph, he followed in their footsteps and did not change anything that Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) did, as the books of the Shia themselves admit.

This proves that the Shiite madh-hab is invalid from its foundations. They tried to escape these overwhelming contradictions by using the principle of taqiyyah[1025] to explain the events of their history. They suggested that 'Ali's keeping quiet about Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) was taqiyyah, and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali's yielding the caliphate to Mu'âwiyah was taqiyyah, and the disappearance and concealment of

their Imams was taqiyyah. Thus it is possible to explain all events that contradict their beliefs by means of taqiyyah.[1026]

3.8.3.b. Their claim that the Imams were infallible

They claimed that the Imams were infallible; they were not heedless, and they did not err or forget. However, this claim is contrary to what is known of their lives. Even the reports of the Shia themselves, which are attributed to the Imams, differ and contradict one another to the extent that there is no report without another one that contradicts it, as was acknowledged by their shaykh aṭ-Ṭoosi.[1027] It is obvious that this cancels out the very foundation of the principle of infallibility, so they came up with the idea of taqiyyah to explain these contradictions and differences and to cover up their lies about the Imams.

The author of *al-Kâfi* narrated that Manṣoor ibn Ḥâzim said: "I said to Abu Abdullah (ﷺ): 'Why is it that sometimes I ask you about an issue and you give me an answer, then someone else comes to you and you give him a different answer?' He said: 'We answer people on the basis of giving more or less.'"[1028] The commentator on *al-Kâfi* said that this means that they: "are more strict when using taqiyyah, and less so when there is no taqiyyah. That is not because of forgetfulness or ignorance; it is because they know that differences among the Shia are better for them and more conducive to their survival, because if they were united in their views, they would be known for being Shia, and that could be a reason for killing them and killing the Imams."[1029]

3.8.3.c. Making the mission of those who fabricate lies about the Imams easy

Another factor is the aim of making the mission of those who fabricate lies about the Imams easy and trying to conceal the real madh-hab of Ahl al-Bayt. They tried to give the impression to their

followers that what they (those who lay down the principle of taqiyyah) transmitted from the Imams was their true madh-hab, whereas the well known sayings and actions of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt in front of the Muslims did not represent their true madh-hab because they did that on the basis of taqiyyah. Using this ploy, it became easy for them to fabricate words and attribute them to the Imams, even as they rejected what was narrated from them of truth. So, for example, you will find them rejecting the words of Imam Muhammad al-Bâqir or Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq that were said in front of people or that were narrated by Muslims of good character, on the grounds that some Sunnis were present, so he 'used taqiyyah in his words'. On the other hand, they accept what is narrated by fabricators such as Jâbir al-Ja'fi alone, on the grounds that there was no one present when he spoke whose presence would necessitate the use of taqiyyah.

It is sufficient for you to know that Imam Zayd ibn 'Ali, who is one of Ahl al-Bayt, narrated from 'Ali (ﷺ) — as is reported in the books of the Twelver Shia themselves — that he washed his feet when doing wuḍoo', but the one they call Shaykh aṭ-Ṭâ'ifah does not accept this hadith and cannot find any reason for rejecting it except taqiyyah. He rejected the hadith, which was narrated in *al-Istibṣâr* from Zayd ibn 'Ali from his grandfather 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, who said: "I was sitting and doing wuḍoo', and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came when I started doing wuḍoo'... and I washed my feet, and he said to me: 'O 'Ali, let water go between the toes, lest the fire go between them.'"[1030] So you can see that 'Ali used to wash his feet during wuḍoo', and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) confirmed that he should let the water go between his toes. However, the Shia went against the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the practice of 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to that and paid no attention to such reports, even when they were narrated in their own books from the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt. The Shiite shaykhs themselves never bothered to think

about these reports or examine them; they always have this ready-made excuse of taqiyyah.[1031]

Hence aṭ-Ṭoosi said: "This report is in accordance with the masses — meaning Ahl as-Sunnah — but it is to be interpreted as being taqiyyah because of what is known without any doubt of the view of our Imams (ﷺ), namely that the feet should be wiped." Then he said: "The narrators of this report are all of the masses (Sunnis) or men of the Zaydi sect; if they narrate a report supporting some of their ideas or practices,[1032] we do not accept it."

With regard to marriage, they have reports that mention the prohibition on temporary, fixed-term marriage. In their books, it is narrated from Zayd ibn 'Ali from his forefathers from 'Ali (ﷺ) that he said: "On the day of Khaybar, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade the flesh of domesticated donkeys and temporary marriage."[1033] Their Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-'Âmili said: "I say: The Shaykh[1034] and others interpreted it as being taqiyyah (in the report), because the permissibility of temporary marriage is one of the fundamentals of the Imami madh-hab."[1035]

With regard to the division of inheritance, a woman cannot inherit anything of property, houses or land.[1036] There is a report from the Imams contradicting that — namely the hadith of Abu Ya'qoob from Abu Abdullah, who said: "I asked him about the man: does he inherit anything of the house or the land of his wife, or is he in the same position as the woman, so he should not inherit anything from her? He said: 'He inherits from her, and she inherits from him, everything that he or she leaves behind."[1037] Aṭ-Ṭoosi said: "We interpret this as being taqiyyah, because everyone who disagrees with us disagrees with us on this issue, and none of the masses (the Sunnis) agree with us on this issue. In such cases, we may interpret it as being taqiyyah."[1038]

3.8.3.d. The principle of taqiyyah was established in order to isolate the Shia from the Muslims

Their Imam Abu Abdullah said: "Whatever you hear from me that resembles the view of the people (meaning Ahl as-Sunnah) is taqiyyah, and whatever you hear from me that does not resemble the view of the people is not taqiyyah."[1039] The result of this belief in taqiyyah was that the views of the Imams were lost to the Shia; even their shaykhs do not know, with regard to the views of the Imams narrated in the reports, what is taqiyyah and what is true.[1040] They set up a method of judging what is true, and it brought the entire madhhab into extremism; what they decided is that whatever is contrary to the masses (meaning Ahl as-Sunnah) is guidance.[1041]

The author of *al-Ḥadâ'iq* admitted that because of taqiyyah, only a few of the rulings of their religion are known for certain. He said: "Therefore none of the rulings of Islam were known on the basis of certainty except a few, because the reports narrated (from the Imams) are mixed with other reports that are interpreted as being taqiyyah." This was also admitted by 'the trustworthy one of Islam' Muhammad ibn Ya'qoob al-Kulayni in his book *al-Kâfi*. He got so confused that when there were conflicting reports, he no longer paid attention to what was thought most likely to be correct, and he resorted to merely submitting to and accepting whatever was narrated from the Imams.[1042]

With regard to how they apply taqiyyah among the Shia, there are reports showing that their taqiyyah is not connected to cases of necessity. Yoosuf al-Baḥrâni admitted that the Imams may give contradictory rulings even if none of those people (Sunnis) were present, so we see them giving several different answers concerning one issue, even if none of them are similar to the Sunni view.[1043]

3.8.4. Concept of taqiyyah among Ahl as-Sunnah

The concept of taqiyyah in Islam is, in most cases, to be used with the disbelievers. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿...except if you indeed fear a danger from them﴾ *(Qur'an 3: 28)*. Ibn Jareer aṭ-Ṭabari said: "The taqiyyah mentioned by Allah in this verse is taqiyyah used with the disbelievers and no one else."[1044] For this reason, some members of the early generation thought that there should be no taqiyyah after Allah (ﷻ) caused Islam to prevail. Mu'âdh ibn Jabal and Mujâhid said: "Taqiyyah was to be used at the beginning of Islam, before the Muslims prevailed, but today Allah (ﷻ) has caused the Muslims to prevail, and there is no danger to be feared."[1045]

On the contrary, the Shias use taqiyyah with the Muslims, especially the Sunnis, to the extent that they think that the era of the best generations was an era of taqiyyah. This was stated by their shaykh al-Mufeed, and it may be noticed in the texts that are attributed to their Imams. They regard Ahl as-Sunnah as being worse in disbelief than the Jews and Christians because in their view, the one who denies the imamate of the twelve Imams is worse than the one who denies prophethood.[1046]

The correct view is that taqiyyah is a concession in cases of necessity. Hence Allah (ﷻ) made an exception to the principle that it is forbidden to become close friends with the disbelievers when He said: ﴿Let not the believers take the disbelievers as *Awliyâ'* [supporters, helpers] instead of the believers, and whoever does that, will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you against Himself [His punishment], and to Allah is the final return﴾ *(Qur'an 3: 28)*. He issued a statement warning against that in the words 'and whoever does that'. In other words, whoever does what Allah (ﷻ) has forbidden has nothing to do with Allah (ﷻ). Then He said: 'except if you indeed fear a danger from them,' meaning that whoever fears

their evil in certain places and at certain times may dissemble or conceal his religion outwardly but not inwardly; his intention must stay true.[1047]

The scholars unanimously agree that taqiyyah is a concession allowed in cases of necessity. Ibn al-Mundhir said: "They were unanimously agreed that the one who is forced to disbelieve, to the extent that he fears he may be killed, and speaks words of disbelief although his heart is at rest with faith[1048] is not to be deemed a disbeliever,[1049] but the one who chooses resolve in such a situation is better." Ibn Baṭṭâl said: "They agreed that the one who is forced to disbelieve and chooses to be killed will have a greater reward with Allah (ﷻ)."[1050] Taqiyyah according to the Shiite view is something quite different, though. For them it is not a concession; it is one of the pillars of their religion.[1051]

Islam is the religion of jihad and calling others to the faith, so taqiyyah cannot be a basic principle and something that is entrenched in the behaviour of the Muslim or a characteristic of the Muslim society. On the contrary, in most cases it is something temporary that is used in individual cases of necessity, and it is related to being unable to migrate; when the situation of compulsion ends, it is no longer to be used. According to the Shiite madh-hab, however, it is regarded as something natural and an essential part of the madh-hab. It is an ongoing and permanent part of social behaviour.[1052] The scholars have stated, based on their knowledge of the situation of the Shia, that their taqiyyah is nothing but lies and hypocrisy.

Ibn Taymiyah differentiated between the taqiyyah of hypocrisy and the taqiyyah that is allowed in Islam. He said that the taqiyyah allowed in Islam "does not mean telling lies and speaking with my tongue something different from what is in my heart, for that is hypocrisy. Instead, I do what I am able to. If the believer is among disbelievers and evildoers, he does not have to strive in physical jihad

against them when he is not able to do so, but if he is able to do that verbally, then he should do that. Otherwise he should do that in his heart, but still he should not lie and say with his tongue something that is not in his heart; he should practice his religion either openly or concealing it. Nevertheless, he should still not show agreement with everything in their religion; rather the most that his taqiyyah may involve is for him to be like the believer in the household of Pharaoh; he did not show agreement with them with regard to all of their religion, but at the same time he did not lie or say anything. Outwardly pretending to follow the false religion is something else altogether; Allah (ﷻ) did not allow that at all except in the case of one who is forced and compelled to such a degree that he has to speak words of disbelief. Allah (ﷻ) may excuse him for that, but the hypocrite and liar will not be excused at all. Moreover, the believer who lives among the disbelievers and has no other choice and is concealing his faith should treat them in accordance with the faith in his heart, on the basis of sincerity, wishing them well even if he does not agree with their religion, as Yoosuf aṣ-Ṣiddeeq did with the people of Egypt, who were disbelievers. This is unlike the Râfiḍi who does not leave any harmful action that he is able to do without doing it to those who differ from him."[1053]

Shaykh Salmân al-'Awdah summed up the differences in the way taqiyyah is understood by Ahl as-Sunnah and the Râfiḍis, saying: "Taqiyyah, for Ahl as-Sunnah, is a temporary exception that is different from the norm, but for the Shia it is something that is obligatory and enjoined until the return of the hidden Imam of Ahl al-Bayt. Acting on the basis of taqiyyah, for Ahl as-Sunnah, ends as soon as the reason for it ends, but for the Shia, it is an ongoing obligation for all that will not end until the appearance of their Mahdi, who will never emerge. The taqiyyah of Ahl as-Sunnah is to be used with the disbelievers in most cases, although it may be used with evildoers and oppressors, but the taqiyyah of the Shia is, in

principle, to be used with Muslims who differ from them, namely Ahl as-Sunnah. For Ahl as-Sunnah, taqiyyah is something that is done reluctantly, and the Muslim resorts to it without feeling happy or at ease with it, but for the Shia, it is a characteristic that is regarded as praiseworthy and good, and there are many texts from their Imams that praise it."[1054]

3.9. The awaited Mahdi between Shiites and Sunnis

3.9.1. Shiite belief in the awaited Mahdi

One of the most prominent beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia, with which their books are filled, is belief in the awaited Mahdi. What the Imami Râfiḍis mean by the awaited Mahdi is Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Askari, who is their twelfth Imam and whom they call 'the proof' and 'the one who stands for the truth'.[1055] They claim that he was born in 255 AH and that he hid in the tunnel of Samarra[1056] in 265 AH; they are waiting for his appearance at the end of time, when he will avenge them against their enemies and support them.[1057] The Râfiḍi Shia still visit the tunnel of Samarra[1058] and call upon him to emerge.[1059]

In fact, this Mahdi who is claimed by the Râfiḍis is non-existent. Al-Ḥasan al-'Askari, whom they name as his father, died without leaving any child behind; his estate was divided between his mother and his brother Ja'far. This Shiite belief in the awaited Mahdi is accompanied by many myths and fables that no rational person could believe. They believe that the Mahdi is one of the descendants of al-Ḥusayn,[1060] and they narrate strange stories about him.[1061]

They say that when he emerges, the Râfiḍi Shia will come from all over to rally around him.[1062] He will bring the Companions

out of their graves and punish them;[1063] he will kill the Arabs and Quraysh;[1064] he will destroy the Ka'bah, the Prophet's Mosque and all other mosques;[1065] he will call people to a new religion, a new book and new laws;[1066] and he will conquer cities with the Ark of the Covenant of the Jews.[1067] Two springs, of water and milk, will flow for him, and one Shiite Râfiḍi man will gain the strength of forty men; he will give them strength and power in their hearing and vision, and he will rule according to the law of the family of Dâwood.[1068]

The beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia concerning their awaited Mahdi are false. This fact is indicated by a number of things:

3.9.1.a. It is proven that this Mahdi was not born

By the wisdom of Allah (ﷻ), it was decreed that al-Ḥasan al-'Askari, the eleventh Imam of the Râfiḍis, should die childless. This was a great scandal and a major setback for the Râfiḍi Shia: how could the Imam die without having any sons who could succeed him as Imam? Their belief is that the one who succeeds the Imam after his death must be his son, and it is not permissible for the imamate to be passed to a brother after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.[1069] The fact that this Mahdi was not born is proven in the books of the Shia themselves.[1070]

3.9.1.b. It makes no sense for the Mahdi to disappear

If we accept for argument's sake that this Mahdi was born, it makes no sense for him to disappear for this long time in the tunnel. When the Râfiḍi Shia are asked about the wisdom behind his disappearance in the tunnel and his not coming out to the people, they explain that he feared for his life.[1071] This is a weak excuse, and many things show this to be false. It is narrated in their books that he will be supported by Allah (ﷻ) and will gain control of the entire earth, east and west. He will fill the earth with justice as it was filled

with injustice, and he will live until the time when 'Eesa ibn Maryam [Jesus the son of Mary (ﷺ)] descends.[1072]

What they say means that the Mahdi will never emerge until the states of injustice and oppression and evil go away, so that he can feel that his life is safe — but at that time there will be no need for him to emerge. These states are able to protect him if he emerges, so why does he not emerge? The one who cannot protect himself from being killed will not be able to protect others either, because the one who does not have a thing cannot give it. How can they be waiting for someone like that to avenge them against their enemies and cause them to prevail? Thus their claims are proven invalid, because the reason why the Mahdi has not emerged is that he fears for his life. Based on that, the claim that the Mahdi existed at all is rendered invalid, because nothing is preventing him from coming out of hiding except fear for his life, as was clearly stated by Shaykh aṭ-Ṭâ'ifah aṭ-Ṭoosi.[1073] So the claims about the existence of the Mahdi are proven false by the testimony of their own scholars, and this is by the grace of Allah (ﷻ).

3.9.1.c. No benefit has been achieved by this Mahdi

Another indication of the falseness of the Râfiḍi Shiite belief in the awaited Mahdi is that this Mahdi, who the Râfiḍis claim will emerge, has not achieved any interest, religious or worldly, and the Muslims have not benefited from him at all, either the Râfiḍis or any others. Ibn Taymiyah said: "This infallible one, whom they claim was born at some time more than four hundred and fifty years ago,[1074] entered the tunnel, according to them, in 260 AH, when he was five years old according to some of them, or younger than that according to others. He did not do anything that the infallible Imam does. What benefits can there be in the existence of such a one, even if he did exist? So how about if he never existed at all? What blessing

or benefit did those who believed in this infallible one attain by means of him in their religious or worldly interests?...This figure in whom the Râfiḍis believe must be either absent, according to them, or non-existent, according to people of reason. Whatever the case, there is no benefit to anyone in either religious or worldly terms."[1075] The Twelver Shia nowadays have gone against this belief in practical terms through their belief in the theory of 'guardianship of the jurist', which allows ruling and governing by an ordinary Muslim who is not infallible and for whom there is no instruction or text from Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ), provided that he has knowledge and is of good character.

3.9.2. The belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah in the Mahdi

The sound hadiths state that at the end of time, Allah (ﷻ) will bring forth a man from Ahl al-Bayt through whom Allah (ﷻ) will cause Islam to prevail. He will rule for seven years, filling the earth with justice and peace as it had been filled with injustice and oppression. During his rule, the Ummah will enjoy blessings that it never enjoyed before; the earth will bring forth its vegetation, the sky will send down rain, and he will give wealth without measure. The following are some of these hadiths:

3.9.2.a.

It was narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "At the end of my Ummah, the Mahdi will appear. Allah will send a great deal of rain for him, the earth will bring forth its vegetation, and he will distribute wealth equally among the people. The numbers of livestock will increase, and the Ummah will become great. He will live for seven or eight"[1076] years.[1077]

3.9.2.b.

It was also narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (ﷺ) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The Hour will not begin until the earth is filled with oppression and enmity. Then a man from my family will emerge, and he will fill it with fairness and justice as it was filled with oppression and enmity."[1078]

3.9.2.c.

It was narrated that Thawbân (ﷺ) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Three will fight one another for your treasure, each one of them the son of a caliph, but none of them will gain it. Then the black banners will come from the east, and they will kill you in an unprecedented manner.' He mentioned something that I do not remember, then he said: 'When you see him, pledge your allegiance to him even if you have to crawl over the snow, for that is the caliph of Allah, the Mahdi.'"[1079]

Ibn Katheer said: "What is meant by the treasure mentioned in this report is the treasure of the Ka'bah; three sons of caliphs will be killed fighting for it until, at the end of time, the Mahdi will appear. His appearance will be from a land in the east, not from the tunnel of Samarra in which the ignorant Râfiḍis claim he has been until now, where they are waiting for him to emerge at the end of time. This is a kind of madness and a great deal of misguidance from Satan, because there is no proof or evidence for that, either from the Qur'an or the Sunnah, or any rational evidence.... He will be supported by people from the east, who will establish his rule. Their banners will be black, which is the colour of dignity, because the banner of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was black and was called *al-'Iqâb*... What is meant is that the promised, praiseworthy Mahdi who will appear at the end of time will originate and appear and emerge from the east, and allegiance will be sworn to him at the Ka'bah, as is indicated by some hadiths."[1080]

3.9.2.d.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "How will you be when the son of Maryam descends and your leader is one of you?"[1081]

3.9.2.e.

It was narrated that Jâbir ibn Abdullah (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "A group among my Ummah will continue to fight for the truth and will prevail until the Day of Resurrection. 'Eesa ibn Maryam will descend, and their leader will say: 'Come and lead us in prayer,' but he will say: 'No, you are leaders of one another,' as an honour from Allah to this Ummah."[1082]

The hadiths, which are narrated in Bukhari and Muslim, indicate two things:

(i) That when 'Eesa ibn Maryam (عليه السلام) descends from heaven, the one in charge of the Muslims will be one of them.

(ii) That their ruler will be there to lead the Muslims in prayer, and the fact that he will ask 'Eesa (عليه السلام) to lead them in prayer when he descends indicates that this ruler will be righteous and guided.

There are other hadiths in the *Sunans* and *Musnads* and elsewhere that explain these hadiths that appear in Bukhari and Muslim; they indicate that the name of that righteous man will be Muhammad ibn Abdullah and he will be called the Mahdi. The reports of the Sunnah support and explain each another.

3.9.2.f.

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "He is one of us behind whom 'Eesa ibn Maryam will pray."[1083]

3.9.2.g.

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (ﷺ) said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The Mahdi is of me. He has a high forehead and a prominent nose. He will fill the world with fairness and justice as it was filled with wrongdoing and injustice, and he will rule for seven years."[1084]

There is no connection at all between the Mahdi of the Sunnah and the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia. There are many differences between them, such as:

- According to Ahl as-Sunnah, the Mahdi's name is Muhammad ibn Abdullah; his name is the same as the Prophet (ﷺ), and his father's name is the same as the Prophet's father. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, his name is Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Askari.
- According to Ahl as-Sunnah, the Mahdi is one of the descendants of al-Ḥasan (ﷺ). The Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia is one of the descendants of al-Ḥusayn (ﷺ).
- According to Ahl as-Sunnah, the Mahdi will be born naturally, and his lifespan will be natural. There is nothing in the hadiths to indicate that he is at all different from other people in that regard. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, his conception and birth happened in one night, and he entered the tunnel when he was nine years old; now he has been in the tunnel for more than 1150 years.
- The Mahdi, according to Ahl as-Sunnah, will emerge to support Islam and the Muslims, and he will not differentiate between one nation and another. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will emerge to support only the Râfiḍi Shia and to wreak vengeance on their enemies. He will hate the Arabs and Quraysh and will give them

nothing but the sword; there will be no Arabs among his followers, according to their reports.

❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will love the Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them); he will ask Allah (ﷻ) to be pleased with them and will adhere to their way. He will also love the Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them) and will not mention them except in the best terms. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, they claim that he will hate the Companions of the Prophet and will bring them out of their graves in order to punish them and then burn them. He will also hate the Mothers of the Believers and will despise the dearest of the Prophet's wives to him, aṣ-Ṣiddeeqah bint aṣ-Ṣiddeeq 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) — or so they claim.

❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will act according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ); he will not leave any Sunnah without establishing it or any innovation without suppressing it. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will call people to a new religion and a new book.

❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will build and frequent mosques. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will destroy mosques; he will destroy al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm and the Ka'bah, and the Prophet's Mosque, and will not leave a single mosque on the face of the earth — as is clearly stated in their reports.

❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will rule in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ). As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will rule according to the law of the family of Dâwood.

❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will emerge from the east. As

for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will emerge from the tunnel of Samarra.

- The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah is true and proven, as indicated by the hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the words of the scholars of the past and of the present. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he is a figment of their imagination who has not appeared and will never appear.[1085]

3.10. Râfiḍi Shiite belief that some people will be brought back from the dead

Raj'ah (belief that some people will be brought back from the dead) is one of the basic tenets of the Shiite madh-hab. One of their reports says: "He is not one of us who does not believe in our Imams coming back."[1086] Ibn Bâbawayh said in *al-I'tiqâdât*: "Our belief concerning raj'ah is that it is true."[1087] Al-Mufeed said: "The Imamis are agreed that the return of many people from the dead (raj'ah) is inevitable."[1088] Aṭ-Ṭubrusi, al-Ḥurr al-'Âmili and other Shiite shaykhs said: "This is something upon which all the Imami Shia agree."[1089] It is one of the fundamentals of their madh-hab; they are enjoined to believe in raj'ah and affirm their belief in supplications and visits to shrines on Fridays and at all times, just as they affirm their belief in tawḥeed, prophethood, imamate and resurrection.[1090] What is meant by raj'ah is return to this world after death.[1091]

Many Shiite groups are of the view that their Imams will return to this life. Some say that they died and will return, and others deny that they died; they say that they are in occultation and will return. The first one to speak of raj'ah was Ibn Saba', who did not believe that 'Ali (ﷺ) died; he said that he had gone into occultation and will return. The belief in raj'ah only applied to the Imam, according to the Saba'is, Kaysânis and others, but according to the Twelvers, it

applies to the Imam and many others. Al-Aloosi indicates that the Shiite belief in the return of the Imam only changed to take on that more general meaning in the third century AH.[1092]

As for the general concept of raj'ah among the Twelvers, it includes three types:

(i) The twelve Imams: the Mahdi will emerge from his hiding place and return from his absence, and the rest of the Imams will come back to life and return to this world after dying.

(ii) Those who usurped the caliphate — in their view — from its legitimate rulers (the twelve Imams), namely the caliphs of the Muslims, foremost among whom are Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân, will be resurrected from their graves and will return to this world so that vengeance might be wrought upon them for taking the caliphate from those who were entitled to it. They will be subjected to torture, killing and crucifixion.

(iii) Ordinary people will also be resurrected, in particular those with pure faith, namely the Shia in general, because they are the only ones who are regarded as having faith. This is the consensus of their reports and the sayings of their shaykhs. Those who have nothing but disbelief will also be resurrected; that refers to all people apart from the weak and oppressed.[1093]

Hence they say, defining raj'ah, that it refers to bringing back many of the dead to this world before the Day of Resurrection[1094] and their returning to this life after death[1095] in their original forms.[1096]

The shaykhs of the Shia looked for evidence in the Book of Allah to prove this belief in raj'ah, which they alone, among all of the Muslims, accept. When they could not find what they were looking

for, they resorted as usual to esoteric interpretations and twisted the meanings a great deal. They imposed their own distorted, far-fetched interpretation in this manner so that the evidence that they produced became evidence against them and proof of their false beliefs. Below are some examples of their interpretation of the verses.

Their foremost interpreter of Qur'an thinks that one of the greatest proofs of raj'ah is to be found in the verse: ﴾And a ban is laid on every town [population] which We have destroyed that they shall not return [to this world again, nor repent to Us],﴿ *(Qur'an 21: 95)*. He says: "This verse is one of the greatest proofs for raj'ah, because no Muslim denies that all people will be brought back on the Day of Resurrection, whether he was among those who were destroyed (as mentioned in the verse) or not."[1097] However, this verse is actually proof against them, since it indicates that there is no raj'ah or coming back from the dead in this world. What it means, as was clearly stated by Ibn 'Abbâs, Abu Ja'far al-Bâqir, Qatâdah and others, is that it is forbidden for the people of any town that was destroyed because of their sins to come back to this world before the Day of Resurrection.[1098]

This is like the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Do they not see how many of the generations We have destroyed before them? Verily, they will not return to them﴿ *(Qur'an 36: 31)* and ﴾Then they will not be able to make bequest, nor they will return to their family﴿ *(Qur'an 36: 50)*. The addition of 'not' (in the phrase 'they shall not return') in the verse from Soorat al-Anbiya' above is additional confirmation of the negative implied by the phrase 'And a ban is laid'. This is an example of the brilliant and precise Qur'anic style. The reason for telling them that they will not return, even though it is clear that they will not return, is to tell them something that will disturb and upset them because they have lost their greatest joy, which is their life in this world.[1099]

However, if what is meant in the verse is a confirmation of raj'ah in the sense of people coming back to life on the Day of Resurrection (and there is no doubt about that),[1100] then the meaning is that it is not possible for them to avoid returning to Allah (ﷻ) for recompense.[1101]

The Shiite idea of raj'ah, or coming back to this world after death, is contrary to the clear text of the noble Qur'an and is invalid based on the evidence of numerous texts of the Book of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾Until, when death comes to one of them [those who join partners with Allah], he says: 'My Lord! Send me back, so that I may do good in that which I have left behind!' No! It is but a word that he speaks; and behind them is Barzakh [a barrier] until the Day when they will be resurrected.﴿ *(Qur'an 23: 99-100)*

The words "and behind them is Barzakh (a barrier) until the Day when they will be resurrected" clearly indicate that is no coming back (raj'ah) at all.[1102]

At the time of death, when they stand before the Almighty and they see hell, the people referred to in these verses all ask to come back to this world. But the answer, in accordance with the prior decree of Allah (ﷻ), is that they will never return to this world. Hence the scholars regarded the idea of returning to this world after death (raj'ah) as one of the most extreme degrees of the innovation of Shiism.[1103] In *Musnad Aḥmad*, it is narrated that 'Âṣim ibn Ḍamurah, who was one of the companions of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), said to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali: "The Shia are claiming that 'Ali will come back." Al-Ḥasan said: "Those liars are lying. If we knew that, his wives would not have remarried and his estate would not have been divided."[1104]

The idea of raj'ah, or return to this world after death so that the evildoers may be punished and those who did good may be rewarded, is contrary to the nature of this world, which is not the place of

requital. ﴾Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the fire and admitted to paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception [a deceiving thing].﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 185)*

The Jew Ibn Saba' played a role in laying the foundations of the principle of raj'ah, except that he said that it only applied to 'Ali (ﷺ); moreover, he denied that death ever befell him in the first place, just as the Twelvers said about the Mahdi who they claim existed. The Imami Shia belief in raj'ah is contrary to what is well established in Islam: that there will be no resurrection before the Day of Resurrection and that when Allah (ﷻ) warns a disbeliever or wrongdoer, He is only warning them about the Day of Resurrection. It is also contrary to the verses and mutawâtir hadiths which clearly state that there is no returning to this world before the Day of Resurrection.

3.11. Their belief in bada' (change in the divine decree)

Another of the basic beliefs of the Twelvers is bada', or change in the divine decree. They exaggerated about this idea and said that Allah (ﷻ) is never worshipped with anything better than belief in bada';[1105] Allah (ﷻ) is never glorified with anything like bada';[1106] if the people knew what reward there is in believing in bada', they would never stop talking about it;[1107] and every Prophet sent by Allah (ﷻ) forbade alcohol and affirmed belief in bada'.[1108] It seems that the one who established this belief among the Twelvers is the one whom they call 'the trustworthy of Islam', their shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 328 or 329 AH). He placed this in the section on basic beliefs in *al-Kâfi*, where he included it in the book of Tawḥeed, and he devoted to it a chapter entitled 'Chapter on change in the divine

decree', in which he listed sixteen hadiths that are attributed to the Imams.[1109]

If we examine the linguistic meaning of the word *bada'*, we find that the dictionary says that the root meaning of this word is 'appear'.[1110] The word has two meanings in Arabic:

(i) Appearing after having been hidden, so one might say, "The walls of the city appeared."

(ii) Development of a new opinion, as in, "He developed an opinion concerning the matter."[1111]

Both of these meanings appear in the Qur'an. The first meaning is translated in this verse as 'disclose': ﴾And whether you disclose what is in your own selves or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it﴿ *(Qur'an 2: 284)*. The second meaning is translated in this verse as 'occurred': ﴾Then it occurred to them, after they had seen the proofs [of his innocence], to imprison him for a time﴿ *(Qur'an 12: 35)*. It is clear in both senses that bada' signifies that ignorance or not knowing came first, and knowing came later; both are impossible in the case of Allah (ﷻ), and attributing them to Allah (ﷻ) is one of the worst kinds of disbelief. How can the Twelver Shia regard this as one of the greatest acts of worship and claim that Allah was never glorified with anything like bada'? ﴾Glory be to You [O Allah]! This is a great lie.﴿ *(Qur'an 24: 16)*[1112]

This evil notion appears in the books of the Jews. In the Torah, which the Jews have distorted according to their whims and desires, there are texts that clearly attribute this notion to Allah (ﷻ).[1113] It seems that the Jew Ibn Saba' took this idea from his Torah and spread it in the Muslim society that he was attempting to influence in the name of Shiism, under the guise of calling for support for the imamate of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). All the sects of the Saba'is believed in bada' and believed that Allah always changes His decree.[1114] The idea was

then transferred to the Kaysâni or Mukhtâri group, who were followers of al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafi. This group was famous for belief in bada'; they paid a great deal of attention to it and adhered to it as an article of faith.[1115]

The Shiite shaykhs used to raise the morale of their followers by affirming that authority would return to them and they would be in control. They even gave a time scale of seventy years, according to a report attributed to Abu Ja'far. When those seventy years had passed and the promise was not fulfilled, the followers complained, so the founder of the madh-hab tried to find a solution to this dilemma by suggesting that something had occurred (bada') to Allah (ﷻ), which dictated that He should change this promise.[1116]

The noble Qur'an affirms the divine attribute of knowledge and thus the falsehood of the Râfiḍi Shia's belief in bada' or changes in the divine decree, which implies attribution of ignorance to Him (ﷻ). The verses which affirm the divine attribute of knowledge are many, such as the following: ﴿And with Him are the keys of the Ghayb [all that is hidden], none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record. It is He Who takes your souls by night [when you are asleep], and has knowledge of all that you have done by day.﴾ *(Qur'an 6: 59-60)*

﴿Should not He Who has created know? And He is the Most Kind and Courteous [to His slaves], All-Aware [of everything].﴾

(Qur'an 67: 14)

Ibn Taymiyah said: This verse clearly indicates that He must have knowledge of all things, on the basis of the following rational evidence:

(i) He is the Creator of all things, and creation means bringing things into existence according to their due measurements. That implies prior knowledge of them and their due measurements before they can be brought into existence.

(ii) That means that there must be divine will, and will implies that there is a prior idea of what is wanted.

(iii) These things come from Him, and He is the only complete cause of their existence. Knowledge of the cause of these things before they come into existence implies knowledge of the thing that is brought into existence, so His knowledge of Himself implies that He has knowledge of everything that comes from Him.

(iv) He Himself is acquainted with all things, and this is what is implied by His having knowledge of all things and having no need of them, as He is self-sufficient in all His attributes.[1117]

These verses also indicate that Allah had knowledge and a preconceived plan of this universe before He created it, based on His prior knowledge of this universe before He brought it into existence. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴾He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements.﴿ *(Qur'an 25: 2)*

﴾Who has created [everything], and then proportioned it. And Who has measured [preordainments for everything even to be blessed or wretched]; and then guided [i.e. showed mankind the right as well as the wrong paths, and guided the animals to pasture].﴿ *(Qur'an 87: 2-3)*

These verses contain the greatest refutation of the beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia, who claimed that Allah (ﷻ) had no knowledge of events until after they happened, and that He might decree something and then change His decree on the basis of new developments. Before He

created this universe, Allah (ﷻ) planned and decreed it according to its due measurements. Nothing happens in this universe that goes beyond His planning and due measurements, beyond His control or beyond what He had written in the Preserved Tablet in Heaven before anything came into existence, but it is the signs of Allah that the polytheists and wrongdoers deny.[1118]

The Sunnah affirms the divine attribute of knowledge. Bukhari narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The keys of the unseen are five, and no one knows them except Allah. No one knows what will happen tomorrow except Allah; no one knows by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or exceed except Allah; no one knows when rain will come except Allah; no one knows in which land he will die; and no one knows when the Hour will begin except Allah."[1119] The matters mentioned in this hadith are all future events, and the hadith indicates that Allah (ﷻ) has knowledge of them before they happen. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah decided the decrees of creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth. And His throne was above the water."[1120]

In the books of the Shia, however, there is a vast accumulation of false reports concerning this, and there are some reports which could be soundly attributed to the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt. They express the correct view on this matter, which is what befits that elite, or they could be traces of the moderate Shia. It was narrated that Manṣoor ibn Ḥâzim said: "I asked Abu Abdullah (ﷺ) whether it is possible that something happened today that Allah (ﷻ) did not know yesterday was going to happen. He said: 'May Allah humiliate the one who says that.' I said: 'Do you not think that Allah knows what has happened and what will happen until the Day of Resurrection?' He said: 'Of course, (He knew it) before He created creation.'"[1121]

3.12. The attitude of Ahl al-Bayt towards the Râfiḍi Shia

The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt are like the rest of Ahl as-Sunnah in their attitude towards the Râfiḍis and their beliefs. They believe that they are misguided and have gone astray from the Sunnah and deviated from the truth, and they are among those who hate and condemn them the most, because they attribute those corrupt beliefs to them (Ahl al-Bayt) and tell a lot of lies about them. There are numerous statements of various kinds made by Ahl al-Bayt in condemnation of the Râfiḍis and disavowing their beliefs. Among the reports that speak of their disavowing the beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia and affirming the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah are the following:[1122]

3.12.1. Mutawâtir report from 'Ali (ﷺ)

The mutawâtir report from 'Ali (ﷺ), according to which he said, when he was on the minbar of Kufah: "The best of this Ummah after its Prophet is Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both."[1123] It was also narrated that he said: "No one gives precedence to me over the two shaykhs but I will punish him with the punishment of the fabricator."[1124] In Bukhari and Muslim, it is narrated that he said of 'Umar when they were carrying him to the graveyard: "You have not left behind anyone with the like of whose deeds I would like to meet Allah more than you. By Allah, I think that Allah will unite you with your two Companions, because I often heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, 'Abu Bakr, 'Umar and I came; Abu Bakr, 'Umar and I went in; Abu Bakr, 'Umar and I went out.'"[1125]

These proven reports from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) contradict the belief of the Shia about the two shaykhs (Abu Bakr and 'Umar), as we have seen above. They indicate that 'Ali (ﷺ) disavowed the Râfiḍi Shia and their beliefs, and he loved and

supported the two shaykhs and all the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). He loved them, as we have seen above, and affirmed that the two shaykhs were superior to him; he punished those who gave him precedence over them, and he wished that he would meet Allah (ﷻ) with deeds like those of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). May Allah be pleased with him and with all the good and pure Companions of the Prophet who are innocent of what these innovators, the Râfiḍi Shia and renegade Kharijites, attributed to them. Then after 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) came the words of his sons, disavowing the Râfiḍis and their beliefs and their criticism of the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah.[1126]

3.12.2. The words of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (رضي الله عنه)

It was narrated that 'Amr ibn al-Aṣamm said: "I said to al-Ḥasan: 'The Shia claim that 'Ali will be resurrected before the Day of Resurrection.' He said: 'They are lying, by Allah; they are not the true Shia. If we knew that he would be resurrected, we would not have let his wives remarry and we would not have divided his wealth.'"[1127]

Abu Nu'aym narrated: "It was said to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (رضي الله عنه): 'The people are saying that you want to become caliph.' He said: 'The Arabs were under my control; they would fight whomever I declared war on and would be peaceful towards whomever I made peace with, but I gave it up, seeking the countenance of Allah and so as to spare the blood of the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ).'"[1128]

3.12.3. The words of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali (رضي الله عنه)

Al-Ḥusayn used to say concerning the Shia of Iraq, who wrote to him promising him support, then scattered and handed him over to his enemies: "O Allah, the people of Iraq deceived me and betrayed me, and they did to my brother what they did. O Allah, bring doom to them and do not let any one of them escape Your punishment."[1129] The outcome of their treachery and abandonment of him was his

martyrdom, may Allah be pleased with him, along with most of those with him who were of Ahl al-Bayt, after those traitors scattered and left him. His killing (ﷺ) was a great shame and a serious calamity that would break the heart of every Muslim.[1130]

3.12.4. The words of 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (may Allah have mercy on him)

It is proven that 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn said: "O people of Iraq, love us as Muslims. Do not love us as idols, for the way you love us has become so bad that it is something we are ashamed of."[1131] It is narrated that a group from Iraq came to him and spoke badly of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them). When they had finished speaking, he said to them: "Can you tell me, are you ﴿the poor emigrants, who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Bounties from Allah and to please Him, and helping Allah [i.e. helping His religion — Islamic Monotheism] and His Messenger [Muhammad]. Such are indeed the truthful [to what they say]﴾ *(Qur'an 59: 8)*?" They said: "No."

He said: "Are you ﴿those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their hearts for that which they have been given, and give them [emigrants] preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful﴾ *(Qur'an 59: 9)*?" They said: "No."

He said: "I bear witness that you are not among those of whom Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿And those who came after them say: 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.'﴾ *(Qur'an 59: 10)* Get out, may Allah (ﷻ) sort you out!"[1132]

3.12.5. The words of Muhammad ibn 'Ali (al-Bâqir)

It was narrated from Muhammad ibn 'Ali (may Allah have mercy on him) that he said: "Banu Fâṭimah (the sons of Fâṭimah) are unanimously agreed on saying the best words concerning Abu Bakr and 'Umar."[1133] It was also narrated that he said to Jâbir al-Ja'fi: "O Jâbir, I heard that some people in Iraq are claiming that they love us, and they impugn Abu Bakr and 'Umar and claim that I am telling them to do so. Tell them from me that I disavow them before Allah (ﷻ). By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, if I were to be appointed to a position of authority, I would seek to draw close to Allah (ﷻ) by executing them. May I never attain the intercession of Muhammad (ﷺ) if I do not seek forgiveness for them (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) and pray for mercy for them. The enemies of Allah (ﷻ) are not aware of their virtue. So tell them that I disavow them and anyone else who shuns Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them)."[1134]

It was narrated that Bassâm aṣ-Ṣayrafi asked Abu Ja'far about Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and he said: "By Allah, I love them and pray for forgiveness for them; I never met anyone of Ahl al-Bayt who did not love them."[1135]

3.12.6. The words of Zayd ibn 'Ali (may Allah have mercy on him)

It was narrated that Zayd ibn 'Ali said: "Abu Bakr was the leader of those who are grateful." Then he recited the verse: ﴾And Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.﴿ *(Qur'an 3: 144)* Then he said: "Disavowing Abu Bakr is disavowing 'Ali[1136] (may Allah be pleased with them both). So if you wish, go ahead, and if you wish, refrain."[1137]

3.12.7. The words of Ja'far ibn Muhammad (aṣ-Ṣâdiq)

It was narrated from 'Abdul-Jabbâr ibn 'Abbâs al-Hamadâni that Ja'far ibn Muhammad came to them when they wanted to leave Madinah and said: "If Allah wills, you are among the righteous of your city. Convey the message from me that whoever claims that I am an infallible Imam to whom obedience is obligatory, I disavow him.[1138] Whoever claims that I disavow Abu Bakr and 'Umar, I disavow him." It was narrated from Sâlim ibn Abdullah ibn 'Umar that Ja'far said to him: "O Sâlim, love them and disavow those who hate them, for they were leaders of guidance." Then Ja'far said: "Would a man impugn his grandfather? Abu Bakr is my grandfather. May I never attain the intercession of Muhammad (ﷺ) on the Day of Resurrection if I do not love them both and disavow those who hate them."[1139] It was also narrated from Ja'far ibn Muhammad that he used to say: "Every time I hope for 'Ali's intercession for me, I also hope for the intercession of Abu Bakr, for he fathered me twice [because the lineage of both of his parents went back to Abu Bakr]."[1140]

It was narrated that he (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and he said: "You are asking me about two men who ate of the fruits of paradise."[1141] It was also narrated from him that he said: "May Allah disavow anyone who disavows Abu Bakr and 'Umar."[1142] Adh-Dhahabi said, commenting on this report: "I say: These words are narrated in mutawâtir reports from Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq; I swear by Allah that he was sincere in what he said and not hypocritical to anyone, may Allah (ﷻ) doom the Râfiḍis."[1143]

These are the views of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, the good and pure ones, whom the Râfiḍi Shia claim as their Imams and claim to love and support, and to whom they attribute their beliefs. This

illustrates and clarifies their stance against the Râfiḍi Shia and their religion, and their disavowal of them and their corrupt deeds and beliefs, including their slandering the best of the Companions and the Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them all). These statements of Ahl al-Bayt prove that they had the same beliefs as Ahl as-Sunnah, both outwardly and inwardly, concerning both major and minor issues. These were the beliefs that they followed, on the basis of which they regarded some as friends and some as enemies. The one who attributes anything other than that to them is lying about them and transgressing against them. May Allah (ﷻ) bestow His abundant mercy upon them and may Allah (ﷻ) humiliate those who attribute lies to them.[1144]

3.13. Stance concerning the idea of rapprochement between Ahl as-Sunnah and the Shia

From the discussion above, we can clearly see the extent to which the Râfiḍi Shia have been misguided, have introduced innovations and have gone astray from the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. We can understand the full extent of the danger and harm contained in their main reference books in the fields of Qur'an interpretation, tawḥeed, hadiths and others. We can also see the harm done to the Muslims from merely accepting and recognising these books that are full of misinformation reaching a level that even the plots of the Orientalists and missionaries did not reach in attempting to change the religion of Allah (ﷻ) and its laws in the name of Islam. In fact, the Orientalists and missionaries relied on these books, and on the specious arguments and myths they contain, to conspire against Islam and the Muslims. This is why there is a strong resemblance, if not total uniformity, between the specious arguments of the orientalists and missionaries and the views of the Râfiḍi Shia.

This is nothing new, and this relationship deserves to be studied on its own in dedicated academic research. A long time ago, our enemies relied on the opinions of the Râfiḍi Shia and used them as a platform from which to fight Islam and its people. The Râfiḍi Shiite troops were the best weapon at the enemy's disposal, and Râfiḍi Shiism became a refuge for everyone who wanted to destroy Islam, including the heretics, the resentful and those who sought vengeance. History is filled with their conspiracies, betrayal and support for the enemy. One of the main reasons for this is that the Râfiḍi Shia do not believe in the legitimacy of any Muslim government except the government of the awaited mahdi, who has been absent for more than eleven centuries; hence the enemy was able to find its way into their hearts through this route.[1145]

Ibn Taymiyah said: "Many of them had a greater inclination towards the disbelievers than towards the Muslims. Hence when the disbelieving Turks came out of the East and killed the Muslims, shedding their blood in Khorasan, Iraq, Syria, Mesopotamia and elsewhere, the Râfiḍis helped them against the Muslims. Similarly, in Damascus, Aleppo and elsewhere, some of the Râfiḍis were among those who offered the greatest help to them in fighting the Muslims. Then when the Christians (the Crusaders) fought the Muslims in Syria, the Râfiḍis were the greatest help to them. They always befriend the disbelievers, polytheists and Christians, helping them fight the Muslims and transgress against them."[1146] Historical evidence is sufficient to confirm that, such as the following:

3.13.1. The conspiracy of the Râfiḍi Ibn al-'Alqami to bring about the fall of Baghdad in 656 AH[1147]

In brief, Ibn al-'Alqami was the adviser of the Abbasid caliph al-Musta'ṣim. The caliph followed the madh-hab of Ahl as-Sunnah, as his father and grandfather had, but he was too lenient and not alert.

This Râfiḍi adviser was planning to destroy the caliph's state, annihilate the Sunnis, and then establish a state on the basis of the Râfiḍi Shiite madh-hab. He took advantage of his position and the heedlessness of the caliph to carry out his conspiracy against the caliphate. The conspiracy consisted of three stages:

(a) Weakening the army and putting pressure on the people by trying to stop the salaries of the Muslim troops. Ibn Katheer said: "The vizier Ibn al-'Alqami tried to dismiss the troops and erase their names from the records. The number of troops at the end of al-Mustanṣir's reign was nearly one hundred thousand, but Ibn al-'Alqami kept trying to reduce their number until there were only ten thousand left."[1148]

(b) Corresponding with the Tatars. Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Then he wrote to the Tatars and encouraged them to attack the country, telling them that it would be easy and informing them of the real situation of the state and its weakness."[1149]

(c) Forbidding the people from fighting and deceiving the caliph. He prohibited the common folk from fighting the Tatars,[1150] and he gave the caliph and his court the impression that the king of the Tatars wanted to make a peace deal with them. He suggested to the caliph that he should go out and stand before the king so that a peace deal could be signed on the basis that half of the produce of Iraq would be theirs, and the other half would be for the caliph. The caliph went out to meet him with seven hundred riders from among the judges, jurists, commanders and prominent people. This trick resulted in the killing of the caliph and the leaders and elite of the Ummah who accompanied him, without requiring any effort on the part of the Tatars.

Those Râfiḍi Shia — or rather, hypocrites — suggested to Hulagu that he should not make a peace deal with the caliph. The

vizier Ibn al-'Alqami said to him: "If you sign a peace deal on the basis that you will have half of the produce, it will only last for one or two years, then things will go back to the way they were." He encouraged him to kill the caliph, although it was said that the suggestion to kill the caliph came from both the vizier Ibn al-'Alqami and Naṣeer aṭ-Ṭoosi.[1151] The Tatars attacked the city and killed everyone they could — men, women, old people, middle aged people and young people. No one was spared except the dhimmis — the Jews and Christians — and those who sought refuge with them or in the house of the vizier, the Râfiḍi Ibn al-'Alqami. It was said that they killed more than ten million Muslims, more or less[1152]; Islam had never seen a massacre like this one that was carried out by the disbeliever Turkic armies, who were called the Tatars. They killed the Hâshimis and captured the women, Abbasids and others. Could he be a lover of Ahl al-Bayt, the one who sent the disbelievers to kill them and capture their women and to do the same to all the Muslims?[1153]

Hulagu and his fighters killed the imams who led the prayers, those who gave the sermons and those who had memorised the Qur'an. The mosques ceased to function, and there were no congregational prayers in Baghdad for several months.[1154]

Ibn al-'Alqami's aims were to eradicate the Sunnah altogether so that the Râfiḍi innovation could prevail, and to build a huge school for the Râfiḍis, where they could spread their madh-hab. However, Allah (ﷻ) did not enable him to do that; He withdrew His blessings from him and caused him to die a few months after that incident, and He caused his son to follow him in death.[1155]

3.13.2. The Safavid state

In the Safavid state, which was founded by Shah Ismâ'eel aṣ-Ṣafawi, the Râfiḍi madh-hab was imposed on the Persians by force and was made the official madh-hab. Ismâ'eel was hard-hearted and

bloodthirsty to a degree than can hardly be imagined.[1156] He propagated the idea that he was infallible, with no distance between him and the Mahdi, and he said that he did not do anything that he was not instructed to do by the twelve Imams.[1157] He carried his sword and wielded it against Ahl as-Sunnah, and he used the reviling of the three (Rightly Guided) caliphs as a means of testing the Persians. This Shah issued orders that they (the caliphs) be reviled openly, in the streets and marketplaces and on the minbars, and he warned that those who refused would be beheaded. When he conquered a city, he would impose Râfiḍism on its inhabitants by force of arms.[1158]

The Râfiḍi shaykhs supported the Safavid rulers in taking Shiism to further stages of extremism. They imposed that on the Muslims of Persia by force of iron and fire. One of the most prominent of these shaykhs was their shaykh 'Ali al-Karki,[1159] whom the Shia call al-Muḥaqqiq ath-Thâni. Shah Ṭahmâsib, the son of Shah Ismâ'eel, kept him close to him and gave him power and authority in the state. Similarly, al-Majlisi was one of the shaykhs of the Safavid state who played a role alongside the political authorities in influencing the Muslims in Persia, to such an extent that it was said that his book *Ḥaqq al-Yaqeen* was a reason for seventy thousand Persian Sunnis becoming Shiites.[1160] It is likely that this is an exaggeration on the part of the Shia, because Râfiḍi ideas had not been able to find any place in Persia except through force and terror, not through thought and conviction.[1161]

We should not forget the other impacts of the Safavid state, which were its wars against the state of the Ottoman Islamic caliphate, its cooperation with the Portuguese and English enemies against the Muslims, and its encouraging them to build churches and bring in missionaries and priests, while fighting the Sunnah and its followers.[1162]

These are some of the actions of their state and their individuals in this field. Among the immortal words and important comments of Ibn Taymiyah in this regard, which will be recognised as being true if you apply them in reality and try to study events of history in the light of his words, are: "Let every wise man look at what is happening in his own time, and in the era that is close to his time, of turmoil, evil and corruption among the Muslims; he will find that most of that is caused by the Râfiḍis. You will find them to be among the most evil of people; they never give up doing what they can to cause turmoil and evil and to spread corruption among this Ummah.[1163] We have learned by direct experience and through confirmed mutawâtir reports that the greatest turmoil and evil, without parallel, comes only from them."[1164]

With whom should we unite, O Ahl as-Sunnah? With those who undermine our Qur'an, interpret it in a way other than what it means, and distort its meanings? With those who regard as disbelievers Abu Bakr and 'Umar, as well as the Mother of the Believers, the dearest of the Prophet's wives to him, 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), and also Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and others among the most prominent Companions (ﷺ)? With those who try to deceive the Muslims in the name of taqiyyah?[1165]

3.13.3. Contemporary experiences with regard to rapprochement

3.13.3.a. The experience of Muṣṭafa as-Sibâ'i

Dr. Muṣṭafa as-Sibâ'i, along with some of the Shiite scholars, put a great deal of effort into addressing the issue of rapprochement. He tried to hold an Islamic conference to study the best way of laying down foundations for harmony, love and rapprochement between the two groups. He thought that one of the greatest factors in coming together would be for the scholars of the two groups to visit one

another and publish books calling for rapprochement, and he thought that no one should publish books that might provoke the other side. Dr. as-Sibâ'i visited one of the senior religious authorities of the Shia, their shaykh 'Abdul-Ḥusayn Sharaf ad-Deen al-Moosawi, whom they regard as one of the greatest proponents of Islamic unity and rapprochement between sects. He found him to be enthusiastic about this idea and a great believer in it, and they agreed to hold an Islamic conference between Sunni and Shiite scholars for this purpose.

As-Sibâ'i (may Allah have mercy on him) also visited prominent Shiites, such as politicians, businessmen and literary experts, for the same purpose, and he came away very pleased with the results of these contacts. He never realised what aims these people were hiding and what plans they were seeking to achieve on the basis of the call for rapprochement. Then suddenly — as as-Sibâ'i described it — shortly after that, this same al-Moosawi, who had been very enthusiastic about rapprochement, published a book about Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) which was full of slanders and insults; in fact, it concluded that Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) was a hypocrite and a disbeliever, and that the Messenger (ﷺ) told him that he was one of the people of Hell.[1166]

As-Sibâ'i said: "I was astounded by the attitude of 'Abdul-Ḥusayn in both his words and his book, this attitude that does not indicate any sincere desire for rapprochement and forgetting the past."[1167] As-Sibâ'i stated that the only thing the Shiite shaykhs offered to contribute to the idea of rapprochement was some flattery and smooth talk in conferences and gatherings, while many of them continued to revile the Companions, think badly of them and believe all such reports that were narrated in the books of their predecessors.[1168] He stated that while they were propagating the idea of coming together, this had no impact on the Shiite scholars in Iraq and Iran. These people were still insisting on what their books

contain of serious criticism and distorted interpretations of the differences that arose among the Companions, as if the aim behind this call for rapprochement was for Ahl as-Sunnah to draw close to the Shiite madh-hab.[1169]

As-Sibâ'i states that with regard to any academic research about the history of the Sunnis, or other Muslim sects that do not agree with the Shiite point of view, some of their scholars denounced the one who did that research, on the basis of the call for rapprochement. They accused the author of this research of being a fanatic who was putting obstacles in the way of those who seek to bring about rapprochement. However, when it comes to a book like that of 'Abdul-Ḥusayn Sharaf ad-Deen, which slanders one of the greatest Companions, whose reports of hadith are regarded as most authentic by Ahl as-Sunnah, these critics and angry people do not regard that as an action that hinders the efforts of those who are striving for rapprochement.

He says: "I am not saying that this book about Abu Hurayrah is the only book. There are books being printed in Iraq and Iran which contain condemnation of the majority of the Companions, which no human being with any conscience or dignity could bear to hear, and which fan the flames of division anew."[1170] This was the experience of Shaykh as-Sibâ'i; his attempt failed in the face of the fanaticism of the Shiite shaykhs and their insistence on enmity against the best generation, who lived during the best era.[1171]

To the Râfiḍi Shia, rapprochement means giving them the opportunity to spread their beliefs in Sunni countries and continue to slander the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), while the Sunnis keep quiet and refrain from stating the truth. If the Râfiḍis hear the truth being propagated, they get angry and start ranting that unity is in danger.[1172]

3.13.2.b. The experience of Shaykh Moosa Jârullah

This noble scholar, whose full name was Moosa ibn Jârullah at-Turkistâni al-Qâzâni ar-Roosi, was the senior shaykh of Russia at the end of the Czarist period and the beginning of the Soviet period. He had ultimate authority over the affairs of Russian Muslims, who numbered more than thirty million. Then came the storm of communism, and he ended up far away from his country and his people. He wrote a number of essays and books, and he travelled in India, the Hijaz, Egypt and Iraq. He said of himself: "I could have attained the position of being the foremost Russian writer and one of the pioneers and leaders, if I had given up my faith, but I preferred to sell this world for the hereafter."[1173]

This noble shaykh put a great deal of effort into trying to unite the Ummah and to bring Sunni and Shiite together. He started by studying the books of the Shia, studying them with great interest, as he said. He studied *Uṣool al-Kâfi wa Furoo'uhu*, *Man la yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqeeh*, *al-Wâfi*, *Mar'ât al-'Uqool*, *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, *Ghâyat al-Marâm* and many other books.[1174] Then he visited Shiite lands and lived among the Shia for more than seven months, visiting their places of worship, shrines and schools, and attending their gatherings and special occasions, both feasts and gatherings for mourning the dead. He attended circles of knowledge in houses, in mosques and their courtyards, and in schools. He stayed in Najaf during Muḥarram and saw everything that the Shia do during the days of mourning and on the day of 'Ashoora (the tenth day of the month of Muḥarram, when the Shia commemorate the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn in 61 AH). The academic conclusion that this scholar reached, based on his deep insight and abundant knowledge, was that refuting the beliefs and practices of the Shia was the first step towards bringing the Ummah together, and that it could not happen without that.

His first step towards rapprochement was to meet the Shaykh of the Shia, Muḥsin al-Ameen, in Tehran. They spoke for a while, then Shaykh Moosa gave him a small piece of paper, dated 16 August 1934; he sent one copy of it to the scholars of Najaf and another copy to the scholars of al-Kadhimiyyah. What was written on the paper was: "I present these issues to the scholars of noble Najaf with all respect, in the hope of achieving some benefits with a sincere heart, aiming to bring together the two worlds of Islam, 'the Imami group that is in the right'[1175] (according to their claim) and Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, hoping that the scholars will respond, altogether or one by one, each with a full explanation and his signature, confirmed with his seal."

In the letter, he then mentioned a number of reprehensible matters that appear in the books of the Shia, quoting page numbers for everything he mentioned. He listed a number of serious issues in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia which were preventing the Ummah from uniting, such as:

- Regarding the Companions as disbelievers.
- Cursing the first generation of Muslims.
- Believing that the noble Qur'an has been tampered with.
- Regarding all the governments of Islamic states throughout the ages, and their judges and scholars, as evil oppressors.
- Regarding all Islamic groups except the Shia as disbelievers who are cursed and will abide forever in Hell.
- Holding the views that jihad alongside anyone but the Imam (ruler) whom it is obligatory to obey is as ḥarâm as eating dead meat or pork, and that there is no martyr except in the case of the Shia. (The Shiite is a martyr even if he dies in his own bed, but anyone other than the Shia

who fights for the sake of Allah is hastening towards Hellfire.)

After quoting the evidence for these issues from the major reference books of the Shia, Shaykh Moosa said, addressing the Shiite shaykhs: "These are six issues in which the Shia believe strongly. Is there any hope left for uniting the Muslims when this is the belief of the Shia? After listing all these issues and beliefs, will the word of unity have any impact on the hearts of those who believe that? Is it possible for Islam to prevail in Muslim nations who hold such beliefs?"

He went on to list other blameworthy matters, such as:

- ❖ The Shia's rejection of the hadiths and reports of the Ummah, and their claim that everything that goes against the way of the Ummah is guidance. He thought that this principle in itself would lead to the destruction of the Shiite religion before it destroyed Islam.
- ❖ In the books of the Shia, there are references to verses and soorahs that were revealed concerning the Imams and the Shia, and verses and soorahs that were revealed concerning the disbelief of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and of those who follow them.
- ❖ The Shia's going to extremes with regard to taqiyyah.

Then he mentioned other reprehensible falsehoods in the books of the Shia, such as:

— The idea that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) divorced 'Â'ishah and she ceased to be one of the Mothers of the Believers.

— The idea that when the Mahdi emerges, he will carry out the ḥadd punishment on 'Â'ishah, avenging his mother Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها), the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ).

— The idea that when the Mahdi appears, he will destroy the mosques of Islam.

Then he stated that the spirit of the Shiite religion is a spirit of enmity, and that the books of the Shia contain stories of enmity between Abu Bakr and 'Umar; he asserted that all of that is fabricated.

He mentioned that the books of the Shia quote one of the Imams as saying: "Even if the Ummah is at a high level of sincerity, honesty and decency, it cannot be regarded as believing because it denies imamate." Even though the Shia do not have anything of religion, they are not to be blamed because they believe in the imamate of a fair and just Imam.

He mentioned some other issues, then he said: "O respected scholars, come and tell me what you think should be done so that Islam and the Muslims can be united around the Book of Allah."

What was the answer of the Shia to the matters that he quoted from their main reference books, hoping for clarification and in accordance with the command of Allah (ﷻ) in His Book: ﴿So ask of those who know the Scripture [learned men], if you know not﴾ *(Qur'an 16: 43)*; *(Qur'an 21: 7)*? Shaykh Moosa said: "Then I waited for more than a year, and I did not hear any answer from anyone except the senior Shia person qualified to exercise ijtihâd in Basra. He carried out his duty and was kind enough to answer all questions in a letter of more than ninety pages, using words of slander with regard to the first generation that were worse than the words in the books of the Shia."

After he did not receive any other response from the Shiite shaykhs, Shaykh Moosa wrote his book *al-Washee'ah fi Naqd 'Aqâ'id ash-Shia*. He said: "I am defending the honour and sanctity of Islam and fulfilling my duties towards the first generation that are due to them from me and from the entire Ummah."[1176]

While Shaykh Moosa Jârullah thought that the effort he put into writing and publishing his book *al-Washee'ah* and advising the Shiite shaykhs would be the first step towards rapprochement and bringing Muslims together, the Shiite shaykhs thought that what Shaykh Moosa revealed must be hidden, and this exposure angered them a great deal. The reason for their becoming angry at the exposure of the falsehoods contained in their books is that this was also an exposure of their ulterior motives and personal aims. It uncovered their exploitation of the ordinary Shiite folk, in religious matters by claiming to be the deputies of the awaited infallible one, and in financial matters in the name of the one-fifth that is due to the awaited Mahdi.[1177]

3.13.4. The proper method for rapprochement and unity

The proper way to bring about rapprochement and unity is for the Sunni scholars to put a great deal of effort into:

- spreading their sound beliefs, which are based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ);
- explaining the soundness of these views and how they are distinct from the madh-habs of the followers of innovation;
- exposing the conspiracies and lies of the Râfiḍi Shia and quoting evidence for that from the books of Ahl as-Sunnah; and
- refuting, on the basis of knowledge, justice and proof, the specious arguments that are aimed at Ahl as-Sunnah.

It is essential that this be accompanied by an explanation of the deviant ways of the Râfiḍi Shia and an exposure of their misguidance and corrupt basic beliefs. Even though the Sunni scholars have

already done some of that, they have to redouble their efforts. Those efforts should be planned, and they should work collectively.

The proper way to achieve unity is to explain the truth and expose the falsehood, in order to bring the Shia close to the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah and a correct understanding of Islam. This is best accomplished through the words of the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah, foremost among whom are the jurists and scholars of Ahl al-Bayt, such as Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and his sons and grandsons. We have to stand up to this wave of Râfiḍi propaganda of which the pure Ahl al-Bayt would be ashamed and which is very active today in the Muslim world and in Europe and America, so that the Muslims can unite on a word that is just and can hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah (the Qur'an) and not be divided among themselves.[1178]

With some of the Shiite scholars, it may seem pointless to present evidence from the Qur'an, Sunnah and scholarly consensus, and to demonstrate to them the flaws in their fundamentals that are contrary to the views of Ahl as-Sunnah. However, that does not mean that we should stop explaining the view of Ahl as-Sunnah and its soundness, and comparing it with the misguidance and invalidity of the Shiite madh-hab with regard to these fundamentals. That will put a limit on the spread of Râfiḍi beliefs among Ahl as-Sunnah, by Allah's leave.

We have to discuss that which exposes their falsehood from their own books. This methodology was not followed by earlier scholars who were keen to refute the Râfiḍis, expose the flaws of their arguments and refute their claims. Perhaps the reason for that is that the books of these people were not widely available because they were only circulated among themselves, or it may be that some of their main reference books were fabricated by later scholars and attributed to their earlier scholars, or that material was added to these

books in later times (particularly during the era of the Safavid state). Whatever the reason, the books of the Râfiḍis today are widely circulated. Many of the Râfiḍi Shia believe in their sanctity and soundness, so they do not believe or accept anything except what is in them; as a result, they reject not only the sound Sunnah but even the clear texts of the Qur'an. Some of them even believe the myths that undermine the Book of Allah and claim that the Imams received revelation and had knowledge of the unseen. Therefore we should try to correct and reform the Shia on the basis of their own books, exposing their misguidance through their own reports. The starting point for rapprochement may be their own books.[1179]

Some efforts have already been made in this field, and some books have appeared, such as: *al-Imâmah wan-Naṣṣ* by Fayṣal Noor, *Thumma Abṣartul-Ḥaqeeqah* by Muḥammad ibn 'Ali al-Qifâri, and *Dirâsah 'an al-Firaq wa Tareekh al-Muslimeen* by Dr. Aḥmad Jilli. This method must be developed in a very careful manner, though, because the reader of the Shiite books may find some white threads in the midst of a huge accumulation of misguidance, and it will then be possible to weave from these threads the sound belief of the Imams, which is in accordance with the Qur'an and sound Sunnah; that could save them from the loss and misguidance in which they are living. Just as these threads have to do with fundamental matters, they also have to do with minor issues. It is on this basis that rapprochement is possible.[1180]

It is also important to point out and encourage sincere Shiite voices who are calling for reform, and to respect them and stand with them in advising their people, as has been done by as-Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Moosawi (may Allah have mercy on him) in his book *Lillâhi thumma lit-Tareekh: Kashf al-Asrâr fi Tabri'at al-A'immah al-Aṭhâr*, and by al-Sayyid Aḥmad Kâtib in his book *Tatawwur al-Fikr as-Siyâsi ash-Shiite min ash-Shoora ila Wilâyat al-Faqeeh*. We have to

stand with everyone who sincerely loves Ahl al-Bayt, following the guidance in the reports that are soundly attributed to them and their beautiful teaching in guiding people to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).

We should treat these people with all due respect and lead them to the safe shore; we should explain the noble Qur'an to them according to the rules of the Arabic language, without twisting or distorting anything; and we should refer understanding of the Sunnah to trustworthy scholars.[1181] The view of any person except the infallible Prophet (ﷺ) may be accepted or rejected. Whatever is narrated from the early generations that is accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, we accept it; otherwise, the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger are more deserving of being followed. We do not criticise or undermine anyone with regard to the issues in which they differed and disputed; they have all passed away, and it is for Allah (ﷻ) to judge them.[1182]

Every innovation that has been introduced into the religion of Islam for which there is no basis, and which people adopt on the basis of their whims and desires — whether it is something that has been added or taken away — is misguidance; it must be opposed[1183] and stopped using the best means that do not lead to something worse. Loving and respecting the righteous, and praising them for what is known of their good deeds, is something by means of which one may draw close to Allah (ﷻ). The close friends of Allah (ﷻ) are those who are mentioned in this verse: ﴾Those who believed, and used to fear Allah much [by abstaining from evil deeds and sins and by doing righteous deeds]﴿ *(Qur'an 10: 63)*. Due respect for them is confirmed on the basis of the Sharia conditions, but they did not possess any power to bring benefit or harm to themselves, either while they were alive or after their death, let alone to anyone else.[1184]

Visiting graves of any type is something that is prescribed in Islam, as long as it is done in the manner mentioned in the reports. However, seeking help from those who are buried or asking to have one's needs met by them, whether one is close to the grave or not, making vows to them, building structures over or screens around their graves, touching them for blessing, swearing by someone other than Allah (ﷻ), and other similar innovations, are major sins that must be opposed so as to block the way that may lead to polytheism; we should not justify these actions.[1185]

The fact that a wrong action is customary does not affect its rulings according to Sharia; it is essential to properly understand these Sharia rulings and adhere to them. We should beware of being deceived by names; we must look at the objects themselves, whether in religious or worldly affairs. What matters is the objects, not the names.[1186] Islam frees the mind and encourages us to ponder the universe, raise the status of knowledge and of scholars, and welcome anything that is good and beneficial. Wisdom is the lost property of the believer wherever he finds it, and he is the most entitled of all people to it.[1187] We do not regard as a disbeliever — because of any opinion or sin — any Muslim who affirms the twin declarations of faith, acts in accordance with their meanings and does the obligatory duties, unless he does one of the following: speaks words of disbelief, rejects something that is well established and known in Islam, rejects a clear text of the Qur'an, interprets the Qur'an in a way that cannot be understood on the basis of the Arabic language at all, or does something that cannot be interpreted in any way except as disbelief.[1188]

These principles and concepts help people in general to understand Islam as it is embodied in the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, the foundations of which were laid down by the Messenger of Allah

(ﷺ), the Rightly Guided Caliphs and those scholars and jurists who followed their way.

The followers of truth who adhere to the way of Ahl as-Sunnah have no innovations, praise be to Allah (ﷻ). Their reference points are the Qur'an and the sound Sunnah, and they cannot give up anything of that because they cannot compromise on issues of religion. As for the Râfiḍi Shia, they take part in a great deal of innovation. Nothing prevents them from giving it up except blind fanaticism, following whims and desires, and the materialistic interests of some of their shaykhs who deviated from the guidance of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them all).

The scholars stated that Ahl as-Sunnah should denounce the innovation of the innovators, even if the person is doing it as an act of worship, believing it to be correct. Nevertheless, we should limit our denunciation of these innovations by evaluating the pros and cons. It may be better to put up with some lesser evil caused by innovation in order to ward off a greater evil, or to miss out on some lesser benefit in order to attain a greater benefit, and this is a sound principle according to the jurists. Following this principle might cause us to refrain from denouncing the innovation of the Râfiḍi Shia at certain times or in certain places, so as to prevent bad consequences, as when condemnation would stir up trouble and lead to bloodshed and fighting among the people of a country where Shiites and Sunnis are equal in number. In normal situations, though, where no bad consequences are expected from this denunciation, it is appropriate and may be obligatory.[1189]

The Sunni scholars have to adhere to a calm, academic style when discussing innovations, and they should be gentle towards the innovators. Part of being gentle may include visiting them and cooperating with them in matters concerning which there is no

dispute, or helping them at times of calamities and difficulties, or supporting them when there is a conflict with a disbeliever or oppressor, in accordance with Sharia guidelines and after weighing the pros and cons. The idea of cooperating, maintaining good relations and discussing calmly cannot be applied across the board to include those Râfiḍi Shia who have extreme views, where keeping quiet about them may provoke the thugs and troublemakers. Instead, we must denounce those who hold extreme and odd views at all times.

The line that is drawn between the first category, to whom we should speak kindly, and the second category, to whom we should speak harshly, depends on whether the one who holds a particular view is relying on a Sharia text that may be causing him some confusion or is relying on an interpretation that some people may favour. In the case of those who base their arguments on reports narrated by unknown narrators or narrators of later generations, and those who do not even base their view on the misinterpretation of some reports, denunciation is more appropriate, and speaking harshly to them may be obligatory.[1190]

In sectarian societies, the decision-makers among the Sunnis are the ones who are able to evaluate the political situation and party alliances with other sects and analyse the pros and cons, according to the guidelines of Islamic teachings. This does not mean that the scholars and the callers to Islam should not teach the Muslims the basics of the way of Ahl as-Sunnah or warn against the deviant beliefs that are infiltrating Muslim societies. This is necessary so that they will not be influenced by those corrupt ideas, whose proponents are striving tirelessly to spread them night and day, secretly and openly. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) migrated to Madinah, he made peace deals with the Jews that guaranteed them a life of dignity under the Islamic state, yet at the same time the noble Qur'an was

discussing the beliefs, history and morals of the Jews so that the Muslims might know their real character and not be deceived by them.

4. The last days of the life of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) and his martyrdom

4.1. The aftermath of Nahrawân

The fact that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) fought this rebellious group offers strong evidence and clear proof that he was in the right when he fought the people of Syria and that he was closer to the truth than Mu'âwiyah. It was narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he said: "A group will secede from my Ummah at a time of division among the Muslims, and they will be killed by the group that is closer to the truth."[1191] The reader might expect the army to have strong resolve in fighting the people of Syria after this and the other proofs mentioned above, such as the killing of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (ﷺ), became clear to them. However, the opposite happened.

The plan that was drawn up by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was to go to Syria after the end of fighting against the Kharijites, because bringing Syria under the control of the caliphate and uniting the Ummah was a necessary goal that had to be pursued. As he mentioned in his speech, fighting the Kharijites was only aimed at securing the interior front lest they attack the women and children left behind in Iraq during his absence. But as they say, the winds blow in a way other than what the sailors want, and 'Ali (ﷺ) was unable to attack Syria before he was martyred.[1192]

The rebellion of the Kharijites had the effect of weakening the army of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). The battles of the Camel, Ṣiffeen and Nahrawân also led the people of Iraq to grow tired of war. They grew reluctant and started hating war, especially after the battle with the Syrians at Ṣiffeen, because their conflict with them was not like fighting with anyone else. The battle of Ṣiffeen was fierce and never left their memory; many children were orphaned, and many women were widowed, without achieving the goal. Were it not for the peace deal or arbitration, which was welcomed by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and many of his companions, disaster would have struck the Muslim world with unimaginably bad consequences. Thus they were very reluctant to march with 'Ali (ﷺ) to Syria, even though they knew that he was in the right.[1193]

One of the dilemmas that destabilized the camp of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was the emergence of a group that went to extremes in venerating him and elevated him to the level of divinity, to the extent that some thought that this was a reaction to the Kharijites who had disavowed 'Ali (ﷺ) and accused him of disbelief.[1194] In reality, the ulterior motive of this group was to introduce corrupt beliefs to the Muslims in order to destroy their religion and weaken the Muslims in general, not just the army.[1195] Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) stood up to them, as we have seen above. Undoubtedly the splitting away of the Kharijites and his subsequent fighting against them weakened his side a great deal, and then problems came one after another.

Al-Khirreet ibn Râshid (it was also said that his name was al-Ḥârith ibn Râshid), who had been one of 'Ali's governors in al-Ahwâz, revolted and led his people Banu Nâjiyah in rebellion. When he called for 'Ali (ﷺ) to be deposed, many people responded and he gained control over many cities, even collecting taxes from the people. 'Ali (ﷺ) sent an army led by Ma'qil ibn Qays ar-Rayyâḥi,

who defeated and killed the rebel leader.[1196] Those people who were paying land tax hoped to stop paying it in the lands under 'Ali's rule, and the people of al-Ahwâz rebelled; 'Ali (ﷺ) was inevitably confronted with military and financial difficulties because of that. Ash-Shu'bi said: "When 'Ali defeated the people of Nahrawân, many people went against him, and people in many regions began to turn against him. Banu Nâjiyah rebelled against him. Ibn al-Ḥaḍrami came to Basra, and the people of al-Ahwâz rebelled. Those who were paying the land tax wanted to stop, and they expelled Sahl ibn Ḥaneef, 'Ali's governor in Persia."[1197]

At the same time, Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) was trying by all possible means, both secretly and openly, to weaken the camp of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), and he took advantage of the division and troubles that had arisen in 'Ali's army. He sent an army, led by 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (ﷺ), to take control of Egypt and bring it under his authority. He was helped by a number of factors, such as:

- Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was preoccupied with the Kharijites.
- 'Ali's governor in Egypt, Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, was not as clever as his predecessor Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah as-Sâ'idi al-Ansâri had been. He got involved in fighting with those who were demanding vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), and he did not try to use diplomacy with them as the previous governor had done, so they defeated him.
- Mu'âwiyah agreed with those who were seeking vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân in Egypt, which helped him to gain control of it.[1198]
- Egypt was far away from the headquarters of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) and was close to Syria.

- The geographical location of Egypt, which was attached to Syria through the Sinai, meant that it was like a natural extension of Syria. Egypt gave Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) a great deal of additional economic strength and human resources. Mu'âwiyah also sent his troops to Arabia, Makkah, Madinah and Yemen, but these troops were soon forced to turn back after Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) sent some of his soldiers to block their way.[1199]

Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) also tried to win over some prominent tribes and governors from 'Ali (ﷺ). He tried to convince Qays ibn Sa'd (ﷺ), who was 'Ali's governor in Egypt, to join him but was not able to. However, he did manage to stir up doubts about him in 'Ali's inner circle and among his advisers, so 'Ali (ﷺ) dismissed him,[1200] and this dismissal of Sa'd ibn Qays was a huge gain for Mu'âwiyah. He also tried to win over Ziyâd ibn Abeehi, 'Ali's governor in Persia, but failed to do so.[1201] However, Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) managed to influence some prominent people and governors because of what he promised to give them and because they realised that Mu'âwiyah was gaining the upper hand and 'Ali (ﷺ) was growing weaker.

'Ali (ﷺ) said in one of his speeches: "Bisr has just come to me from Mu'âwiyah, and I think these people will prevail over you because of their unity and support for their falsehood and your division and lack of support for your truth; because of their obedience to their leader and your disobedience to your leader; because they are sincere, and you are treacherous. I appointed so-and-so, but he betrayed me and took the wealth to Mu'âwiyah; I appointed someone else, and he betrayed me and took the wealth to Mu'âwiyah. Even if I entrusted one of you with a wooden vessel, I would fear that he would betray me concerning it. O Allah, I hate them, and they hate me. Relieve them of me, and relieve me of them."[1202]

4.2. 'Ali's attempts to motivate his army, then the truce with Mu'âwiyah

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) did not give up when faced with these calamities, this reluctance on the part of his followers and their letting him down. He did his utmost to motivate his troops with all that he possessed of knowledge, proof and eloquence. His fiery speeches, for which he was famous and which are regarded as the best literary legacy, were not the product of an idle mind or mere imagination; they were based on bitter experience and the painful reality that he was living. When some border land under his control was raided, he said: "Jihad is one of the gates of paradise, which Allah opens to the closest of His friends. It is the garment of piety, the shield of Allah and the greatest protection. Whoever abandons it because of lack of interest, Allah will give him a garment of humiliation to wear; calamities will befall him, he will be brought low and a seal will be placed on his heart. He will be led away from truth because of neglecting jihad; he will be humiliated and deprived of justice.

"Verily, I called you by night and by day, secretly and openly to fight these people. I told you to attack them before they attacked you, for by Allah, no people are attacked in their land but they are humiliated. But you were negligent and reluctant, so attacks were launched against you and land was taken from you. Here is a man from Ghâmid whose troops reached al-Anbâr; he killed Hassân al-Bakri, chased your cavalry from their posts and defeated them. I have heard that one of them would enter upon a Muslim woman and a dhimmi woman and take her jewellery, and she could offer no resistance except weeping and asking for mercy. Then they left without any harm having befallen them; no man among them was ever wounded, and none of his blood was shed. If a Muslim man were to die after that of sorrow for what happened, he would not be to blame; rather in my eyes that would be appropriate.

"How strange it is, by Allah, that these people are united in their falsehood, and you are disunited and do not support your truth. This is what breaks the heart and brings grief and sorrow. May you perish, for you have become a target to be shot; you are raided and do not raid others, you are attacked and do not attack others. Allah is being disobeyed, and you are pleased with that. If I command you to march towards them on a hot day, you will say that it is too hot and we should wait until it cools down. If I command you to march towards them in winter, you will say that it is too cold and we should wait until it warms up. All of that in order to avoid heat and cold. If you are trying to avoid heat and cold, then by Allah you will try harder to flee from the sword, O you men who are not men. You have the minds of children and are as irrational as women.

"Would that I had never seen you or met you, for knowing you, by Allah, has caused me great grief and sorrow. May Allah kill you, for you have filled my heart with pus and anger, and you have caused me a great deal of distress. You have spoiled all my plans with your disobedience and reluctance, to the point that Quraysh have begun to say that the son of Abu Ṭâlib is a courageous man, but he has no experience of war. What a strange thing they are saying! Is there anyone among them with more experience of war than me? Or who has attained a higher position in it than me? For I got involved in it when I had not yet reached the age of twenty, and here I am having passed the age of sixty. But if a man is not obeyed, his wisdom is to no avail."[1203]

This was a fiery speech delivered by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), in which he heaped criticism on the heads of those people who had prevented him from reaping the fruits of his jihad and achieving the victory he strove for. He composed this speech in a sublime literary style, with phrases that should have stirred people's hearts and unleashed their potential. It is free of any ambiguity or

mysteriousness, and it is also free of artificial, far-fetched rhymed prose.[1204]

The speeches that are proven to be from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) and were delivered during his caliphate not only give a picture of the historical reality; they also highlight the feelings of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) about the problems he faced with his army becoming reluctant and slowing down after the Battle of Nahrawân. However, most of the speeches that are attributed to him (ﷺ) are not sound, and many scholars say that the speeches of 'Ali (ﷺ) that are quoted in *Nahj al-Balâghah* are made up and fabricated by 'ash-Shareef ar-Raḍiy'.[1205] It is essential to employ a precise, critical method when dealing with them as a historical source.

At the same time, 'Ali (ﷺ) began to remind his companions of his virtues and his high standing in Islam. A number of eyewitnesses narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) implored the people at ar-Raḥbah: "Who heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say at Ghadeer Khumm: 'Don't you know that I am closer to the believers than their own selves?' and they said yes, then he said: 'If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla. O Allah, love those who love him, and take as an enemy those who take him as an enemy'?" Twelve men — or sixteen men, according to another report — stood up and testified to that.[1206] This reminds us of 'Uthmân's (ﷺ) calling on the Companions to testify to his virtues when the rebels besieged him. It is as if he was saying: If a person's actions and service to Islam are like that, should his reward be like this?

Despite all his tremendous attempts and efforts, 'Ali (ﷺ) could not achieve what he wanted. He could not manage to lead a campaign to Syria because of the division, friction and disunity that occurred within his army, and because of the emergence of people who were controlled by whims and desires. As a result, in 40 AH, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was forced to come to an agreement

with Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân (ﷺ), that Iraq would be for 'Ali and Syria would be for Mu'âwiyah, and that neither would interfere in the other's sphere of influence by means of any raid or military campaign.[1207] Aṭ-Ṭabari said in his book of history: "In 40 AH, there was a truce between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, following a correspondence between them, which is too lengthy to be quoted here, about agreeing to put an end to war between them. 'Ali would have Iraq, and Mu'âwiyah would have Syria, and neither would interfere in the other's sphere of influence by means of any raid or military campaign."[1208]

4.3. The supplication of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) asking that his martyrdom be hastened

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) made a truce with Mu'âwiyah, but it seems that this truce did not last. Mu'âwiyah sent Bisr ibn Abi Arṭa'ah to the Hijaz in the year in which 'Ali (ﷺ) was martyred.[1209] When 'Ali (ﷺ) was not able to prepare an army as he wanted, and he saw how they had let him down, he began to hate life and wish for death. He would turn to Allah (ﷻ) in supplication and ask Him (ﷻ) to hasten his death. One of the reports from him says that he delivered a speech one day in which he said: "O Allah, I am tired of them, and they are tired of me. Relieve me of them, and relieve them of me. What is keeping the most wretched of you from contaminating it with blood?" And he put his hand on his beard.[1210]

'Ali (ﷺ) persisted in supplications throughout his final days. It was narrated that Jundub said: "They crowded around 'Ali (ﷺ) so much that they stepped on his feet, and he said: 'I am tired of them, and they are tired of me; I hate them, and they hate me. Relieve me of them, and relieve them of me.'"[1211] According to another report, Abu Ṣâlih said: "I saw 'Ali place the muṣḥaf on his head until the paper crackled, and he said: 'O Allah, I asked them to grant me what

is mentioned in it (the Qur'an), but they refused. O Allah, I am tired of them, and they are tired of me; I hate them, and they hate me. They have forced me to do things out of character. Give them someone worse than me, and give me someone better than them. Cause their hearts to dissolve like salt in water.'"[1212] According to another report, it was only three days or so before he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him.[1213]

Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali said that 'Ali (ﷺ) told him: "I dreamt that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to me last night, and I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, do you see how much trouble and pain I have from your Ummah?' He said: 'Pray against them.' I said: 'O Allah, replace them for me with someone better than them, and replace me for them with someone worse to them than me.'" Al-Ḥasan (ﷺ) said: "Then he went out, and the man struck him."[1214]

4.4. 'Ali's awareness that he would be martyred

Some hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ), which are regarded as signs of his prophethood, narrate that he told 'Ali (ﷺ) that he would be one of the martyrs. In *Ṣaheeḥ Muslim*, it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was on Mount Uḥud, and it shook. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Be still, Uḥud, for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a Ṣiddeeq and a martyr." On it were the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Talhah, az-Zubayr and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs (may Allah be pleased with them all).[1215]

There are other hadiths that are more specific than this; they said that 'Ali would be martyred in the land of Iraq and spoke of how he would be assassinated, too. All of this is a demonstration of the truth of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ), and the fact that he said that which Allah (ﷺ) told him by means of revelation and did not

speak from his own desire.[1216] The Prophet (ﷺ) told 'Ali (ﷺ) what was going to happen to him, and 'Ali believed that with certainty and used to tell them about it. One of these reports narrated what 'Ali said when he was heading towards Iraq. Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali narrated that he heard 'Ali (ﷺ) say: "Abdullah ibn Salâm came to me when I had put my foot in the stirrup and said to me: 'Where are you going?' I said: 'Iraq.' He said: 'Verily, if you go there, the edge of the sword will strike you there.' I said: 'By Allah, I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say that before.'" Abu al-Aswad said: "I was amazed at that and said: 'A fighter telling such a thing about himself!'"[1217]

'Ali (ﷺ) also spoke of this hadith in Yanbu' before he was appointed to the caliphate, to Abu Fuḍâlah al-Ansâri al-Badri (ﷺ), who visited him when he was sick. He said: "I am not going to die of this sickness (or this pain), for the Prophet (ﷺ) promised me that I would not die until this (meaning his beard) was contaminated from this (his head, because of bleeding from his head)."[1218] He told this hadith to the Kharijites and to his companions. Al-Bayhaqi compiled these hadiths and others in *Dalâ'il an-Nubuwwah*,[1219] and al-Ḥâfidh Ibn Katheer compiled them in *al-Bidâyah wan-Nihâyah*.[1220] It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Sab' said: "I heard 'Ali (ﷺ) say on the minbar: 'We are only waiting for a wretched man. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) promised me that this (his beard) would be contaminated with the blood of this (his head).' They said: 'Tell us who your killer is, so that we may go and annihilate his family.' He said: 'I urge you by Allah not to kill anyone for my killing except the one who kills me.'[1221] Then he recited some lines of poetry and said:

Gird your loins in preparation for death, for death is imminent;
Do not be scared of killing when it arrives in your valley."[1222]

Some reports go further than that and say that 'Ali (ﷺ) knew who this wretched person was who would kill him. 'Ubaydah as-Salmâni narrated with a sound chain of narration that whenever 'Ali

saw Ibn Maljam, he would say: "I want him to live, and he wants me to die."[1223]

According to another report, 'Ali (ﷺ) said concerning 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam: "Verily, this one is my killer." It was said: "What is keeping you from dealing with him?" He said: "He has not killed me yet."[1224] The people asked him to appoint a successor when he told them that he would be killed, but he refused to do that. It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Wâsi' said: "I heard 'Ali say: 'This (his beard) will be contaminated from this (from blood flowing from a wound to the head). What is this wretch waiting for?' They said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, tell us who he is so that we can annihilate his family.' He said: 'By Allah, then you would be killing because of me people who are not involved in my killing.' They said: 'Appoint a successor for us.' He said: 'No, but I will leave you as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) left you.' They said: 'What will you say to your Lord when you meet Him?' He said: 'I will say: O Allah, You left me with them as long as You wanted, then You took me to Yourself. You are still with them; if You will, You can guide them, and if You will, You can let them go astray.'"[1225] It was also narrated from 'Ali (ﷺ) that he said: "I heard aṣ-Ṣâdiq al-Maṣdooq (ﷺ) say: 'You will be struck here' — and he pointed to his temples — 'and the blood will flow until it contaminates your beard, and the one who does that will be the most wretched among them, just as the one who hamstrung the she-camel was the most wretched of Thamood.'"[1226]

4.5. The martyrdom of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) and the lessons to be learned from it

The battle of Nahrawân left a deep wound in the souls of the Kharijites, which the passage of time only made more painful and sorrowful, so a group of them decided to murder 'Ali (ﷺ) in vengeance for their brethren who had been slain at Nahrawân.

Biographers and historians all mention a famous report,[1227] which is not free of flaws because it contains some contradictions, and we do not think it unlikely that this important event was, like others, subjected to embellishment in later times. Based on the sources and studies, there seems to be a consensus that the killing of 'Ali (ﷺ) took place at the hands of Kharijite elements in revenge for those who had been killed at Nahrawân. It is difficult to accept and believe the rest of the stories that are connected to this slaying, such as the love story between Ibn Maljam and Quṭâm, the alleged role of al-Ash'ath al-Kindi — whose innocence we shall prove below — and so on. The following are the details of the murder of 'Ali (ﷺ):

4.5.1. The meeting of the conspirators

The story of Ibn Maljam and his companions says that Ibn Maljam, al-Buruk ibn Abdullah and 'Amr ibn Bakr at-Taymi got together and talked about the people's situation. They criticised their rulers, then they mentioned the people who had been killed at Nahrawân and prayed for mercy for them, and they said: "What is life worth after they are gone, our brethren who called the people to worship their Lord and never feared the blame of the blamers for the sake of Allah? Why don't we sell ourselves for the sake of Allah, and go to the leaders of misguidance and try to kill them, so that the land will be relieved of them and we may avenge our brethren thereby?" Ibn Maljam, who was from Egypt, said: "I will take care of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib for you." Al-Buruk ibn Abdullah said: "I will take care of Mu'âwiyah for you." 'Amr ibn Abi Bakr said: "I will take care of 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ for you." So they made a solemn pledge and swore by Allah that none of them would give up or leave his target alone until he killed him or died in the attempt. Then they took their swords and put poison on them, and agreed that on the seventeenth of Ramadan, each one of them would attack his target. Then each of them went to the city where his target was.[1228]

4.5.2. Ibn Maljam's departure and his meeting with Quṭâm, the daughter of ash-Shajnah

Ibn Maljam al-Murâdi belonged to the tribe of Kindah. He set out and met his companions in Kufah, but he concealed his secret from them for fear that they might disclose his plans. One day he saw some people from the tribe of Taym ar-Rabâb, ten of whom 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) had killed on the day of Nahrawân, and they talked about their slain ones.

On the same day, he met a woman of Taym ar-Rabâb named Quṭâm bint ash-Shajnah, whose father and brother had been killed in the battle. She was a very beautiful woman. After he saw her, he could not get her out of his mind, and he forgot the purpose for which he had come. He proposed to her, and she said: "I shall not marry you unless you do what I tell you." He said: "What is that?" She said: "Three thousand, a slave man and woman, and the killing of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib." He said: "This will be your mahr. As for the killing of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), I do not think that you are serious about marrying me if you want me to kill 'Ali." She said: "Seek him out and try to kill him. If you succeed, then you and I will both be happy, and you can live happily with me. If you are killed, then that which is with Allah is better than this world and its adornments." He said: "By Allah, I have only come to the city to kill 'Ali, so you will have what you asked for." She said: "I will find someone to help you and assist you in achieving what you want."

She sent for a man of her people, Taym ar-Rabâb, whose name was Wardân. She spoke to him, and he responded. Ibn Maljam went to a man from Ashja', whose name was Shabeeb ibn Bajrah, and said to him: "Will you be interested in something that will bring you honour in this world and the hereafter?" He said: "What is it?" Ibn Maljam said: "Killing 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib." Shabeeb said: "May your mother be bereft of you! This is something terrible. How can you kill

'Ali?" Ibn Maljam said: "I will lie in wait for him in the mosque, then when he comes to pray the dawn prayer, we will attack him and kill him. If we survive, then we will be happy and will have gotten revenge; if we are killed, then that which is with Allah is better than this world and everything in it." Shabeeb said: "Woe to you, if it was someone other than 'Ali, it would be more bearable to me. You know the sacrifices he made for Islam and that he was one of the first to stand with the Prophet (ﷺ). I do not feel comfortable with the idea of killing him." Ibn Maljam said: "Do you not know that he killed the people of Nahrawân, the righteous slaves of Allah?" Shabeeb said: "Yes." Ibn Maljam said: "Then we should kill him in revenge for those of our brethren whom he slew." Then Shabeeb agreed.

Then they went to Quṭâm, who was observing i'tikâf in the Great Mosque, and said to her: "We have agreed to kill 'Ali." She said: "If you want, you may come to me." Ibn Maljam went back to her on the night before Friday, the night before the morning on which 'Ali was killed in 40 AH. He said: "This is the night on which I agreed with my two companions that each of us would kill his target." She brought silk bands and tied them around their chests, then they took their swords and sat opposite the door from which 'Ali would come out. When he came out, Shabeeb struck him with his sword, but his sword hit the jamb of the door or a small window. Ibn Maljam struck him on the head with his sword. Wardân ran away and entered his house, and a man of his father's tribe entered upon him as he was taking the silk band from his chest. He asked: "What is this silk and sword?" They told him what had happened, and he left, then he came back with his sword, pounced on Wardân and killed him.

Shabeeb went out towards the gates of Kindah before dawn. A man from Haḍramawt, whose name was 'Uwaymir, caught up with him, and Shabeeb still had his sword in his hand. Shabeeb grabbed the Haḍrami man and threw him to the ground. When he saw the

people coming after him and he still had his sword in his hand, he feared for his life, so he dropped the sword and managed to escape by mingling with the crowd of people. They also chased Ibn Maljam and caught up with him, then a man from Hamadân, whose kunyah was Abu Adma', took his sword and struck him in the leg, bringing him to the ground.

'Ali (ﷺ) was late for the prayer, so Ja'dah ibn Hubayrah ibn Abi Wahb took his place and led the people in the dawn prayer. 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Bring the man to me." He was brought, and 'Ali said: "O enemy of Allah, did I not treat you well?" He said: "Yes." He said: "What made you do this?" He said: "I sharpened it for forty days and I asked Allah to cause the worst of His creation to be killed by it." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "I don't think but that you will be killed by it; I think you are the worst of His creation."[1229]

4.5.3. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah narrated the story of the slaying of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali

Ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah said: "By Allah, on that night on which 'Ali was struck, I was praying in the Great Mosque with a large number of the people of the city. They were praying near the door, standing, bowing and prostrating, and they never got tired from the beginning of the night until the end. When 'Ali came out for the dawn prayer, he started calling out: 'O people, the prayer, the prayer.' I do not know whether he came out of the door and said these words or not, but I saw the flash of the sword and I heard (the words): 'Ruling is for Allah, O 'Ali, not for you and not for your companions.' I saw a sword and then a second sword. Then I heard 'Ali saying: 'Don't let the man escape.' The people ran after him from all sides, and soon Ibn Maljam was caught and brought to 'Ali. I was among those of the people who entered, and I heard 'Ali (ﷺ) saying: 'A life for a life. If I die, then kill him as he killed me, and if I live, I shall decide about him.'"[1230]

He said that the people went to al-Ḥasan, and they were upset by what had happened to 'Ali (ﷺ). While they were with him and Ibn Maljam was tied up before him, Umm Kulthoom bint 'Ali called out to him, weeping: "O enemy of Allah, my father will be fine, but Allah is going to humiliate you." He said: "For whom are you weeping? By Allah, I bought it (the sword) for one thousand, and I put enough poison on it for one thousand. If this blow had struck all the people of the city, none of them would have survived."[1231]

4.5.4. The doctor's advice to 'Ali (ﷺ) and his inclination towards the process of consultation

It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Mâlik said: "The doctors gathered around 'Ali (ﷺ) on the day he was wounded, and the most knowledgeable of them in medicine was Atheer ibn 'Amr as-Sukooni, who had been the personal physician of Chosroes. Atheer got the fresh lung of a sheep, took a vein from it and inserted it into 'Ali's wound; then he inflated the vein and pulled it out, and there was some white brain matter on it, so he knew that the blow had reached his brain. He said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, give your final instructions, for you are going to die.'"[1232]

It was said that Jundub ibn Abdullah entered upon 'Ali (ﷺ) and asked him something. He said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, if we lose you — may we never lose you — should we swear allegiance to al-Ḥasan?" He said: "I will not command you or forbid you; you decide."[1233]

4.5.5. Final advice of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali to his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them all)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) called for al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and said: "I urge you to fear Allah and not to seek worldly

luxury, even if it becomes available to you. Do not weep for anything that you have lost (of worldly gains). Speak the truth, show compassion to orphans, help the destitute, and strive for the hereafter. Be an opponent of the wrongdoers and support the one who is wronged. Act upon what is in the Book and never fear the blame of the blamers (when striving) for the sake of Allah." Then he looked at Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah and said: "Have you heard the advice I gave to your two brothers?"[1234] He said: "Yes." He said: "I advise you likewise. I advise you to respect your two brothers because of their great rights over you. Follow them, and do not decide about anything without consulting them." Then he said: "I advise you both to take care of him, for he is the son of your father, and you know that your father loved him." He said to al-Ḥasan: "I advise you, O my son, to fear Allah, establish regular prayer on time, and pay zakâh to those who are entitled to it. Do wuḍoo' well, for there is no prayer without purification, and no prayer is accepted from one who withholds zakâh. I advise you to forgive others, suppress your anger, uphold ties of kinship, be forbearing with the ignorant, keep seeking knowledge of Islam, verify the facts before making any decision, always read the Qur'an, be a good neighbour, enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and avoid immoral actions."[1235]

When death was imminent, he gave the following advice:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. This is the advice given by 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, affirming that he bears witness that there is no God except Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and that Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger. He sent His Messenger [Muḥammad (ﷺ)] with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religions even though the polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah hate it.[1236] Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the *'Âlameen*

(mankind, jinn and all that exists). He has no partner. This I have been commanded, and I am of the Muslims.[1237]

"I advise you, O Ḥasan and all my children and family, to fear Allah your Lord, and never die except in a state of Islam,[1238] and hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah (this Qur'an), and be not divided among yourselves.[1239] I heard Abu al-Qâsim say: 'Reconciling between people is better than supererogatory prayers and fasts.' Check on your relatives and uphold ties with them, then your reckoning with Allah will be easier. I urge you by Allah to be kind to orphans, and do not silence them or ignore them when they are with you. I urge you by Allah to be kind to your neighbours, for your Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined that, and he continued to enjoin that until we thought that he would make the neighbour an heir. I urge you by Allah to take care of the Qur'an, and do not let others be better at putting it into practice than you. I urge you by Allah to take care of the prayer, for it is the foundation of your religion. I urge you by Allah to take care of the House of your Lord; do not forsake it as long as you live. I urge you by Allah to engage in jihad for the sake of Allah with your wealth and your lives. I urge you by Allah to take care of zakâh, for it extinguishes the wrath of the Lord. I urge you by Allah to take care of those whom your right hands possess (female slaves).

"Prayer, prayer; never fear the blame of the blamers for the sake of Allah. Allah will suffice you against anyone who wants to harm or transgress against you. Speak kindly to people as Allah has commanded you, and do not give up enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, lest the worst of you attain positions of authority, then you will call upon Allah but receive no response. I enjoin you to keep in touch with one another and help one another; beware of turning away from one another, cutting off ties with one another and becoming divided. Cooperate in righteousness and piety;

do not cooperate in sin and transgression. Fear Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment. May Allah take care of you, my household. May the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) continue to guide you. I bid you farewell, peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah."

Then he did not say anything except *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* (There is none worthy of worship other than Allah) until he died, may Allah (ﷺ) be pleased with him, in the month of Ramadan 40 AH.[1240]

According to another report, he was killed on the morning of 21 Ramadan.[1241] This report may be understood as referring to the day on which he left this world, because he remained alive for three days after he was struck by this wretched man.[1242]

4.5.6. 'Ali's prohibition of mutilation or torture of his killer

'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Detain this man. Then if I die, kill him, and if I live, wounds equal for equal."[1243] According to another report, he said: "Feed him and give him water and treat him well. If I recover, then I am in charge of the matter and I will forgive him if I want, or if I want, I will settle the score."[1244] There is some additional material in another report, according to which he said: "If I die, then kill him as he killed me but do not overstep the mark, for Allah likes not the transgressors."[1245] 'Ali forbade al-Ḥasan to mutilate him and said: "O Banu 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, I do not want you to indulge in shedding the blood of the Muslims, saying he killed Amir al-Mu'mineen, he killed Amir al-Mu'mineen. No one should be killed in retaliation for my killing except the one who killed me. Listen, O Ḥasan. If I die from this blow of his, then give him blow for blow, but do not mutilate the man, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saying: 'Beware of mutilation, even of a ferocious dog.'"[1246]

There are many reports about the final words of 'Ali (ﷺ) concerning the one who killed him; some of these reports are sound and some of them are weak. The report which says that 'Ali (ﷺ) gave instructions to burn his body after killing him has a weak chain of narration. Other reports all say the same, that 'Ali issued instructions that the man be killed if he died as a result of his strike, and forbade them to do anything other than that. These reports support one another and reach such a level that they become binding evidence.

Moreover, Amir al-Mu'mineen did not regard him as an apostate and order that he be killed; rather he forbade that when some of the Muslims wanted to kill him, and he said: "Do not kill the man. If I recover, then wounds equal for equal,[1247] and if I die, then execute him."[1248]

The famous historical report says: "When 'Ali (ﷺ) died, al-Ḥasan sent for Ibn Maljam, who said to al-Ḥasan: 'How about a deal? By Allah, I never made a pledge to Allah but I fulfilled it. I made a pledge to Allah, between the Black Stone and Maqâm Ibrâheem, that I would kill 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah or die in the attempt. If you wish, you may let me go and try to kill Mu'âwiyah, and I promise you by Allah that if I do not kill him, or if I kill him and survive, I will come to you and put my hand in yours.' Al-Ḥasan said to him: 'By Allah, not until you see hellfire,' and he went and killed him.[1249] Then the people took him and burned him with fire." This report has an interrupted chain of narration, though.[1250]

The sound reports, which are more befitting to al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Ahl al-Bayt, say that they adhered to the final instructions of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali in dealing with 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam.

There is a report — which is not sound — that says: "When 'Ali was buried, they brought Ibn Maljam, and the people gathered,

bringing naphtha and wood. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah, al-Ḥusayn and Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭâlib said: 'Let us enjoy our revenge on him.' Abdullah cut off his hands and feet, and he did not speak or show any fear. Then his eyes were put out, but he did not panic; he said: 'You are applying kohl to your uncle's eyes,' and recited the soorah ﴿Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created [all that exists]...﴾ *(Qur'an 96: 1)* to the end, with his eye sockets bleeding. Then orders were given to catch hold of his tongue in order to cut it out, at which point he panicked. It was said to him: 'Why are you panicking?' He said: 'This is not panic, but I hate to be in this life, conscious, without remembering Allah.' They cut out his tongue, then they burned him. He was dark skinned with a handsome face, gaps between his teeth and hair down to his earlobes, and on his forehead was the mark of prostration."[1251] Again, this report is not sound.

Adh-Dhahabi said concerning 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam: "He was the killer of 'Ali (ﷺ), a Kharijite and evildoer... He took part in the conquest of Egypt alongside prominent people. He was one of those who had knowledge of the Qur'an and studied Islam. He was one of Banu Tadool and was a prominent hero in Egypt. He learned the Qur'an from Mu'âdh ibn Jabal and was a devoted worshipper. It was said that he was the one who sent Subaygha al-Tameemi to 'Umar (ﷺ) to ask him about what was not clear to him of the text of the Qur'an. Then his destiny overtook him, and he did what he did.

"According to the Kharijites, he is one of the best of the Ummah. Concerning Ibn Maljam, 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân al-Khâriji said: 'What a beautiful blow from a righteous man, who was seeking thereby nothing except the pleasure of the One of the mighty Throne. Sometimes I remember him and think of him as the best of people before Allah.'

"According to the Râfiḍis, Ibn Maljam will be the most wretched of creation in the hereafter. According to us, Ahl as-Sunnah, he is one of those who we hope will be in hell, but we believe that it is possible that Allah may forgive him. He is not as either the Kharijites or the Râfiḍis think of him. He comes under the same ruling as the killers of 'Uthmân, az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, 'Ammâr, Khârijah and al-Ḥusayn. All of these killers we disavow and hate them for the sake of Allah, but we leave their case to Allah (ﷻ) to decide as He will."[1252]

As for al-Buruk ibn Abdullah, on the night on which 'Ali was struck, he lay in wait for Mu'âwiyah. When Mu'âwiyah came out to pray the dawn prayer, he attacked him with his sword, and his sword fell on Mu'âwiyah's backside, then he was captured. Al-Buruk said: "I have some news that may please you tonight; will it benefit me with you if I tell it to you?" Mu'âwiyah said: "Yes." Al-Buruk said: "A brother of mine has killed 'Ali this night." Mu'âwiyah said: "Perhaps he could not manage to do that." Al-Buruk said: "No, 'Ali comes out with no one to guard him." Mu'âwiyah ordered that he be killed, then he sent for as-Sâ'idi, who was a physician. The doctor said: "Choose one of two ways of treatment: I will either heat a piece of iron and put it where the sword fell, or I will give you medicine to drink, but you will never be able to have children after that, although you will recover. The sword that struck you was poisoned." Mu'âwiyah said: "As for fire, I cannot bear it. As for not having any more children, I have Yazeed and Abdullah, who are enough joy for me." So the doctor gave him that medicine and he recovered, but he had no more children after that. Because of this incident, Mu'âwiyah ordered that booths be set up and night guards appointed, and he appointed police to stand by his head when he prostrated.

As for 'Amr ibn Bakr, he lay in wait for 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ that night, but he did not come out because he had a stomachache. 'Amr

ibn al-'Âṣ told Khârijah ibn Ḥudhâfah, who was his chief of police and was of (the tribe) Banu 'Âmir ibn Lu'ayy, to go out and lead the prayer. 'Amr ibn Bakr attacked and killed him, thinking that he was 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ. The people caught him and took him to 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, greeting him as the governor. The killer said: "Who is this?" They said: " 'Amr (ibn al-'Âṣ)." He said: "Who did I kill?" They said: "Khârijah ibn Ḥudhâfah." He said to 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ: "Woe to you, O evildoer. By Allah, I did not think that he was anyone but you." 'Amr said: "You wanted me, but Allah wanted Khârijah." Then 'Amr ordered that he be executed.[1253]

4.5.7. The length of 'Ali's caliphate, the location of his grave and the age at which he was killed

According to Khaleefah ibn Khayyâṭ, 'Ali's caliphate lasted four years, nine months and six days — or, it was said, three days or fourteen days.[1254] But it seems that it was four years, nine months and three days, because allegiance was sworn to him as caliph on 18 Dhul-Ḥijjah 35 AH, and he died as a martyr on 21 Ramadan 40 AH.[1255]

The body of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was washed by al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Abdullah ibn Ja'far (may Allah be pleased with them) and was shrouded in three pieces of cloth, among which was no chemise.[1256] Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ) offered the funeral prayer for him, saying takbeer four times.[1257] According to one report with no chain of narration, he said nine takbeers over him.[1258]

As for the location of his grave, the reports differ concerning it. Ibn al-Jawzi narrated a number of reports concerning that, then he said: "Allah knows best which is most correct."[1259] Among the reports concerning this matter are the following:

- That al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ) buried him by the mosque in ar-Raḥbah, which is near the gates of Kindah, before the people finished praying the dawn prayer.[1260]

- That he was buried at night in Kufah near the governor's palace beside the Jâmi' mosque, and the location of his grave was unmarked.[1261]

- That his son al-Ḥasan (ﷺ) took him to Madinah.[1262]

- That the grave which is just outside Kufah, the shrine in Najaf, is the grave of 'Ali (ﷺ), but this was rejected by some scholars such as Shurayk ibn Abdullah an-Nakha'i, the qâḍi of Kufah (d. 178 AH) and Muḥammad ibn Sulaymân al-Haḍrami (d. 297).[1263]

In fact, the innovation of the so-called shrine of 'Ali (ﷺ) in Najaf was introduced during the days of Banu Buwayh, who were Râfiḍi Shia, during the Abbasid era. The Shia fabricated this idea, as is their wont, during the fourth century AH, but the scholars unanimously agree that this is not the grave of 'Ali (ﷺ); it was said that it is the grave of al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah. Ibn Taymiyah said: "As for the shrine in Najaf, people of knowledge are unanimously agreed that it is not the grave of 'Ali; it was said that it is the grave of al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah instead. No one said that this was the grave of 'Ali, and no one went there for the purpose of visiting 'Ali's grave, for more than three hundred years, despite the fact that so many of Ahl al-Bayt, the Shia and others, ruled in Kufah. It was only taken as a shrine during the reign of Banu Buwayh — the Persians — more than three hundred years after the death of 'Ali."[1264]

There is also a difference of opinion concerning 'Ali's age when he was killed. Some said that he was fifty-nine years old when he was killed; others say that he was sixty-five or sixty-three years old. This last view is the most correct.[1265]

4.5.8. The speech of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ) after the slaying of his father

It was narrated that 'Amr ibn Ḥubnashi said that al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali addressed them after the killing of 'Ali (ﷺ) and said: "A man left you yesterday who was never preceded by the early ones in knowledge and will never be caught up with by the later ones. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to send him on expeditions and give him the banner, and he would not give up fighting until victory was granted to him.[1266] He did not leave behind any gold or silver, except for seven hundred dirhams from his stipend, which he was keeping for the servant of his family."[1267]

4.5.9. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ (ﷺ) praises 'Ali (ﷺ)

It was narrated from Rabee'ah al-Jarshi that mention was made of 'Ali in the presence of a man, and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ was also present. Sa'd said to him: "Do you remember 'Ali? Verily, he had four qualities which, if I had one of them, would be dearer to me than such and such." And he mentioned the red camels. These four qualities were: the Prophet's saying "I shall give the banner..."; his saying, "You are to me like Haroon was to Moosa"; and his saying, "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla."[1268] (The narrator forgot the last one.)

4.5.10. Abdullah ibn 'Umar praises 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ)

It was narrated that Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah said: "A man came to Ibn 'Umar and asked him about 'Uthmân (ﷺ). He mentioned his good deeds and said: 'Perhaps that bothers you?' He said: 'Yes.' He said: 'May Allah cause your nose to be rubbed in the dust!' Then he asked him about 'Ali (ﷺ), and he mentioned his good deeds and said: 'It is all true, and that is his house in the midst of the houses of

the Prophet (ﷺ).' Then he said: 'Perhaps that annoys you?' He said: 'Indeed it does.' He said: 'May Allah cause your nose to be rubbed in the dust! Go away and do whatever you can against me.'"[1269]

4.5.11. How Mu'âwiyah responded to the news of 'Ali's slaying

When the news of 'Ali's slaying reached Mu'âwiyah, he began to weep. His wife said to him: "Are you weeping for him when you fought him?" He said: "Woe to you, you do not know what the people have lost of virtue, understanding and knowledge."[1270] Mu'âwiyah used to write to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) and ask him about the new issues he faced. When Mu'âwiyah heard that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) had been killed, he said: "Knowledge and understanding have been lost with the death of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib." His brother 'Utbah said to him: "Do not let the people of Syria hear you saying that." He told him: "Leave me alone."[1271]

During his caliphate, Mu'âwiyah asked Ḍirâr aṣ-Ṣadâ'i to describe 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) to him. He said: "Excuse me from that, O Amir al-Mu'mineen." He said: "No, I insist." He said: "If I must describe him, then by Allah he was far-sighted and strong in supporting Islam; he spoke the truth[1272] and ruled with justice; knowledge flowed from him, and his wisdom manifested itself in all that he did; he felt alienated from this world and its adornments, and felt at ease with the night and its loneliness; he shed tears frequently and thought deeply; he liked garments that were short and food that was coarse; he was like one of us and would answer us if we asked him, and tell us if we questioned him. By Allah, despite his bringing us close to him, we could hardly speak to him, out of respect. He showed great respect to people of piety and religious commitment and brought the poor close; the strong man could not have any hope (of being let off by 'Ali) if he was in the wrong, and the weak man could never despair of

his justice. I bear witness that I saw him standing in the middle of the night, when the stars appeared deeper in the sky, holding on to his beard and groaning like one in pain, weeping like one who is grieving, saying: 'O worldly delights, tempt someone else; are you trying to tempt me or do you have hope that I could be tempted? No way, no way. I have divorced you thrice, an irrevocable divorce. Your time is short, and you are insignificant. I complain of little provision, a long journey and loneliness on the road.'" Then Mu'âwiyah wept and said: "May Allah have mercy on Abu al-Ḥasan. By Allah, he was like that. How great is your grief for him, O Ḍirâr?" He said: "Like the grief of a woman whose child was slaughtered in her lap."[1273]

It was narrated that 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in a dream, and Abu Bakr and 'Umar were sitting with him. I greeted him with salâm and sat down, and while I was sitting, 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah came in and were led into a room, then the door was closed while I was looking on. Soon 'Ali came out, saying 'Judgement has been passed in my favour, by the Lord of the Ka'bah.' Soon after that, Mu'âwiyah came out saying, 'I have been forgiven, by the Lord of the Ka'bah.'"[1274]

Ibn 'Asâkir narrated that a man said to Abu Zur'ah ar-Râzi: "I hate Mu'âwiyah." He said to him: "Why?" He said: "Because he fought 'Ali." Abu Zur'ah said to him: "Woe to you; Mu'âwiyah's Lord is Most Merciful and Mu'âwiyah's opponent was noble and generous. What has the matter between them got to do with you? May Allah be pleased with them both."[1275]

4.5.12. What al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri (may Allah have mercy on him) said

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri was asked about 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه), and he said: "By Allah, 'Ali was a straight arrow that Allah sent

against His enemy, the prominent jurist of this Ummah, whose service to Islam cannot be denied, one of the most senior figures in Islam, a relative of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was never heedless of the command of Allah and never feared the blame of the blamers, he never showed any interest in worldly gains, he adhered to the Qur'an in the most perfect manner, and thus he attained the pleasure of Allah. This was 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (may Allah be pleased with him)."[1276]

4.5.13. What Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said concerning the caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ)

Abdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: "I was sitting before my father one day when a group of people from Karkh came and talked a great deal about the caliphate of Abu Bakr, the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb and the caliphate of 'Uthmân, and they talked even more about the caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib. My father raised his head to look at them and said: 'O people, you have talked too much about 'Ali and the caliphate, and the caliphate and 'Ali. Do you think that the caliphate adorned 'Ali? On the contrary, 'Ali adorned it.'"[1277]

4.5.14. Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays is innocent of the murder of 'Ali (ﷺ)

Some reports accuse al-Ash'ath ibn Qays of being involved in the murder of 'Ali. Al-Ya'qoobi said: " 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam stayed with al-Ash'ath ibn Qays for a month, sharpening his sword."[1278] Ibn Sa'd stated in *aṭ-Ṭabaqât*: " 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam spent that night, preceding the morning on which he had decided to kill 'Ali, with al-Ash'ath ibn Qays in the place where he used to pray. Then when dawn was about to break, al-Ash'ath said: 'Dawn has broken.' 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam and Shabeeb ibn Bajrah stood up and picked up their swords, then went and sat

opposite the door from which 'Ali would come out."[1279] This report is weak, though.[1280]

There is no evidence for accusing al-Ash'ath because when we examine the role he played in 'Ali's caliphate, we find that he was sincere and loyal to 'Ali (ﷺ). He was the first one to fight the people of Syria in the battle for the water, and he showed enmity towards the Kharijites from the time they first appeared. He is the one who told 'Ali that the Kharijites were saying that 'Ali had repented from his sin and recanted the arbitration, and he fought them at Nahrawân. He was also keen to strengthen his ties with Ahl al-Bayt, and he gave his daughter in marriage to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ). When al-Ḥasan wanted to go to his bride, the tribe of Kindah spread their cloaks from his door to the door of al-Ash'ath.[1281] Al-Ash'ath died forty days after the murder of 'Ali, and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib offered the funeral prayer for him.[1282] Al-Ḥasan was the husband of his daughter.[1283] There is no narration from the family of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) to suggest that they levelled this accusation against al-Ash'ath or that they discussed it with any member of al-Ash'ath's family. The murder of 'Ali was carried out only by the Kharijites, and was mostly within the context of avenging the slain of Nahrawân.[1284]

4.5.15. The danger posed by the misguided and deviant groups to the Muslims

When misguided sects and deviant groups spread in Muslim lands, they pose a danger to the Muslims, threatening security and stability, making the people doubt their beliefs and spreading corruption and ruin. That was the case with the Kharijite renegades who rebelled against 'Ali (ﷺ) and regarded him as a disbeliever, a group of whom caught him unawares and killed him, as we have seen above. They claimed that they were selling their souls for the sake of Allah by doing this deed, but they had no proof or evidence for that;

rather they were following whims and desires and obeying Satan. When we understand from the previous information that the Kharijites were the cause of 'Ali's slaying, and we recognise the corruptness of their way of thinking, then we will realise that the Muslim Ummah must beware of them, warn against them and oppose them. The scholars and callers to Islam have to do their part so that security and safety may be established; then the lights of the Sunnah will shine forth, and the fires of innovation will be extinguished. This can be achieved in the best manner by supporting the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah and standing up to innovation and innovators. These are means of reviving societies, and this is the best way to bring Muslims together and unite them. Whoever ponders the lengthy history of Islam will realise that the states which were based on and adhered to the Sunnah are the ones that united the Muslims, adopted the ideology of jihad, and enjoined what is good and forbade what is evil; by means of these states, Islam prevailed in the past and in modern history. This is unlike those states that were established on a foundation of innovation and created chaos, division and innovation, leading to disunity; those states soon died out and became extinct.[1285]

4.5.16. The deeply entrenched grudges against the sincere believers that filled the hearts of the Kharijites

The deeply entrenched grudges against the sincere believers that filled the hearts of the Kharijites are indicated by the words of 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam, who said concerning his sword: "I bought it (the sword) for one thousand, and I put enough poison on it for one thousand. If this blow had struck all the people of the city, none of them would have survived."[1286]

These words of his highlight the blatant enmity harboured by these Kharijites, not only against the ordinary believers but also against prominent leaders such as 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), whose character combined the greatest and noblest characteristics. Look, may Allah bless you, at how corrupt ideas and deviant thoughts, and those who promote them, can lead people to such a wretched level that they assassinate believers and leave idolaters alone.[1287]

4.5.17. Impact of a bad environment on the people who live in it

A bad environment has an impact on the people who live in it, even if some of them love justice and strive for it. Ibn Maljam went to a man from Ashja', whose name was Shabeeb ibn Bajrah, and said to him: "Will you be interested in something that will bring you honour in this world and the hereafter?" Shabeen said: "What is it?" Ibn Maljam said: "Killing 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib." Shabeeb said: "May your mother be bereft of you! This is something terrible. How can you kill 'Ali?" Ibn Maljam said: "I will lie in wait for him in the mosque, then when he comes to pray the dawn prayer, we will attack him and kill him. If we survive, then we will be happy and will have gotten revenge; if we are killed, then that which is with Allah is better than this world and everything in it." Shabeeb said: "Woe to you, if it was someone other than 'Ali, it would be more bearable to me. You know the sacrifices he made for Islam and that he was one of the first to stand with the Prophet (ﷺ). I do not feel comfortable with the idea of killing him." Ibn Maljam said: "Do you not know that he killed the people of Nahrawân, the righteous slaves of Allah?" Shabeeb said: "Yes." Ibn Maljam said: "Then we should kill him in revenge for those of our brethren whom he slew." The report of aṭ-Ṭabari says that he was persuaded by these words.[1288]

Look, may Allah bless you, at how people with misguided ideas can influence the people that they mix with and sit with. Even though Shabeeb was not happy with the idea of killing 'Ali because of what he knew of his great efforts in support of Islam and his seniority with regard to being with the Prophet (ﷺ), he responded to Ibn Maljam when he persuaded him with his specious arguments, reminding him that 'Ali (ﷺ) had killed his fellow Kharijite renegades. Thus he stirred up his emotions and convinced him, even though these brethren had been killed lawfully, not unlawfully. He responded to his request and agreed with him, and the outcome was corrupted thinking, a ruined reputation and obvious loss.

This reminds every Muslim to beware of keeping company with anyone who has corrupt beliefs and deviant ideas, and to hasten to sit with devoted scholars who know the truth and act upon it and guide people to that which serves their best interests in this world and the hereafter. If he does not accept that straight path and mixes with these deviants and is influenced by their beliefs, he will end up biting his fingers in regret at a time when regret is to no avail,[1289] as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴾And [remember] the Day when the dhâlim [wrongdoer, oppressor, polytheist] will bite at his hands, he will say: 'Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger [Muḥammad].' 'Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as an intimate friend! He indeed led me astray from the Reminder [this Qur'an] after it had come to me. And Satan is to man ever a deserter in the hour of need.'﴿

(Qur'an 25: 27-29)

These are some of the lessons to be learned from the slaying of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), the devoted scholar who spent his entire life submitting to Allah (ﷻ), turning to Him always. He showed us a blessed way to follow and set a blessed example for us to emulate.

4.6. Eulogies for Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali

4.6.1. Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali

Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said: "Most narrators attribute these lines of verse to Umm al-Haytham bint al-'Aryân an-Nakha'iyyah:

O eye, why do you not help us,
why don't you weep for Amir al-Mu'mineen?
Umm Kulthoom weeps for him.
Tell the Kharijites, wherever they are,
May Allah never comfort those who rejoice in his death.
Is it in the month of Ramaḍan that you made us grieve
for the loss of the best of all people?
...
He acquired all beautiful qualities, but above all he attained
the love of the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds.
Quraysh know very well that you are the best among them
in lineage and religious commitment.
If you see the face of Abu Ḥusayn [meaning Ali],
you will see the full moon above those who look at it.
Before his death we were in a good state and
we could see the mawla of the Messenger of Allah with us,
Striving to establish the truth and never doubting it,
being fair to enemies and relatives alike,
Never withholding any knowledge he had,
and he was never one of the tyrants.
When the people lost 'Ali, it was as if
they were cattle lost for years."[1290]

4.6.2. Ismâ'eel ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥimyari

Ask Quraysh, if you are not aware, who was the most
steadfast and strongest in devotion to the faith?

Who was the earliest in Islam, greatest in knowledge
and had the best wife and children,
The one who declared the oneness of Allah
when Quraysh disbelieved the Prophet,
calling upon idols and rivals alongside Allah?
Who was the most just, most knowledgeable,
the most sincere in fulfilling promises?
If they tell you the truth, they will only mention Abu Ḥasan
['Ali], unless you ask someone who envies the righteous.[1291]

4.6.3. Bakr ibn Ḥammâd at-Tâharti[1292] and his refutation of the Kharijite poet 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân[1293]

The Kharijite poet 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân said:

What a beautiful blow from a righteous man,
who was seeking thereby nothing except
the pleasure of the One of the mighty Throne.
Sometimes I remember him and think of him
as the best of people before Allah.

Bakr ibn Ḥammâd at-Tâharti said in response to that:

Say to Ibn Maljam when the decree of Allah
inevitably comes to pass: 'Woe to you,
you have destroyed a pillar of Islam;
You have killed the best of those who walk the earth,
the first of people in Islam and faith;
The most knowledgeable of the Qur'an among people,
and the most knowledgeable of the Sunnah of the Messenger.

...

Rather the blow came to him from a misguided person
and that blow will land him in hell;
he will meet Allah when He is angry with him,

As if he intended nothing by this blow
except to go to hell for eternity.[1294]

* * *

Thus Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib departed this world after striving mightily in jihad, and with his death, one of the brightest and purest chapters of history came to an end. History knows him as a brilliant man of a unique calibre. His ultimate aim was to seek the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ); his main concern was that Islam should prevail; his greatest wish was that the rulings of Allah (ﷻ) should govern the world of mankind, and his highest aspiration was that justice should be achieved among his subjects.

Studying the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs will strengthen the resolve of the new generation of Muslims and guide them. It will bring to life the beauty and splendour of the early days of Islam, teach them that the affairs of the last of this Ummah will never be sound except through that by which the affairs of the early generation became sound, and help the callers to Islam, scholars and seekers of knowledge to follow the example of that era. The Muslims should study its characteristics and features, the attributes of its leaders and community, its system of ruling and the way in which it governed people's affairs. That will help the young people of this Ummah to restore the Ummah to its role of leading humanity.

I completed this book at 12.55 p.m. on Saturday, 7 Rabee' al-Âkhir 1424 AH/7 June 2003 CE, by the grace of Allah (ﷻ). Praise be to Allah first and foremost. I ask Him to accept this work, to open people's hearts in order for them to benefit from it, and to bless it from His bounty. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Whatever of mercy [i.e. of good], Allah may grant to mankind, none can withhold it; and whatever He may withhold, none can grant it thereafter. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.﴾ *(Qur'an 35: 2)*

Upon the completion of this book, I cannot but stand before Him with humility, turning to Him and acknowledging His blessings and grace, recognising that I have no power and no strength of my own. Allah (ﷻ) is the Bestower of blessings, He is the Giver of honour, He is the Helper, and He is the guide. To Him be praise for that with which He has blessed me from beginning to end. I ask Him, may He be glorified, by His beautiful names and sublime attributes, to make this work of mine sincerely for His sake alone and beneficial to His slaves, and to reward me for every letter I have written and add it to my record of good deeds. May He also reward my brothers who helped me with all that they could to complete this humble effort. We hope that every Muslim who reads this book will not forget in his supplications the author, the slave of Allah who is in need of his Lord's forgiveness, mercy and good pleasure, for a supplication offered for one's brother in his absence will be answered, if Allah (ﷻ) wills. I end this book with the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favours which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves.﴿ *(Qur'an 27: 19)*

Glory and praise be to You, O Allah. I bear witness that there is no god but You; I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You. And the end of our supplication is: Praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds.

A servant who is in need of his Lord's pardon,
forgiveness, mercy and good pleasure

Ali Muḥammad Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣallâbi

7 Rabee' al-Âkhir 1424 AH

Conclusion

This is what Allah (ﷻ) has enabled me to compile in the chapters of this book, which I have called in Arabic *Seerat Ameer al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib: Shakhṣiyatuhu wa 'Aṣruhu* (*Biography of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib — his Life and Times*). Whatever is correct herein is purely by the grace of Allah (ﷻ), to Whom be praise. Whatever errors are contained herein, I ask Allah to forgive me, and I repent to Him; Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) have nothing to do with them. However, I was keen to avoid making mistakes so that I would not be deprived of reward. I ask Allah (ﷻ) to make this book of benefit to my Muslim brothers and sisters, and I ask those who read it to remember me in their prayers, for the supplication for one's brother in his absence will be answered, if Allah wills. I end this book with the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴾Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.﴿ *(Qur'an 59: 10)*

Glory and praise be to You, O Allah. I bear witness that there is no God but You; I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You.

Weak and fabricated hadiths about Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ)

1. "Allah revealed three things to me concerning 'Ali on the night on which I was taken on the night journey: that he was the leader of the believers, the imam of the pious and the commander of those with bright faces and limbs (from doing wuḍoo')." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 353.

2. "Three people are ahead of everyone else: the one who reached Moosa first, Joshua; the one who reached 'Eesa first, the man mentioned in *Ya-Seen*; and the one who reached Muhammad first, 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib." Very fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 358; *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 3334.

3. " 'Ali is the leader of the righteous: the one who supports him will prosper, and the one who lets him down is doomed." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 357; *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 37799.

4. "The duel of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib against 'Amr ibn 'Abd Wudd is better than the deeds of my Ummah until the Day of Resurrection." A lie. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 400.

5. "O Allah, verily Your slave 'Ali has devoted himself to Your Prophet, so cause the sun to rise again for him." According to another report: "O Allah, he was preoccupied with obeying You and Your Messenger, so cause the sun to rise again for him."

Asma' said: "I saw it setting, then I saw it rising after it had set." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 971.

6. "Allah enjoined me to love four and told me that He loves them." It was said: "O Messenger of Allah, who are they?" (According to another report: "Tell us their names.") He said: "'Ali is one of them," and he repeated this three times, "and Abu Dharr, Salmân and al-Muqdâd. He enjoined me to love them and told me that He loves them." Weak. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 1549, no. 3128; *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi',* no. 1566; *Ḍa'eef Sunan al-Tirmidhi,* no. 771; *Ḍa'eef Sunan Ibn Mâjah,* no. 28; *Al-Mishkât,* no. 6249.

7. "I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate. Whoever wants knowledge, let him come to its gate." Weak. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 2955.

8. "I am the slave of Allah, the brother of the Messenger of Allah; I am the senior *ṣiddeeq,* and no one claims that after me but a liar. I prayed seven years before the people." False. *Ḍa'eef Sunan Ibn Mâjah,* no. 23.

9. "May Allah have mercy on 'Ali. O Allah, cause truth to be on his side wherever he is." Very weak. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 2094; *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi',* no. 3095; *Ḍa'eef Sunan al-Tirmidhi,* 767; *al-Mishkât,* no. 6125.

10. "'Ali is with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is with 'Ali; they will never be parted until they both come to the reservoir." Weak. *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi',* no. 3802.

11. "'Ali is the king of the believers, and wealth is the king of the hypocrites." Weak. *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi',* no. 3805.

12. "On the night on which I was taken on the Night Journey, I came to my Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, and He revealed to

me three things concerning 'Ali: he is the leader of the Muslims, the guardian of the pious and the commander of those with bright faces and limbs." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4889.

13. "O Anas, go and call the leader of the Arabs" — meaning 'Ali. 'Â'ishah said: "Are you not the leader of the Arabs?" He [the Prophet (ﷺ)] said: "I am the leader of the sons of Adam, and 'Ali is the leader of the Arabs. O Anṣâr, shall I not tell you something which, if you adhere to it, you will never go astray after that?" They said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He said: "This is 'Ali: Love him because you love me, and honour him because you honour me, for Jibreel enjoined upon me from Allah the same as I have enjoined upon you." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4890.

14. "You will explain to my Ummah what they differ about after I am gone." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4891.

15. "I am the warner, and 'Ali is the guide. Through you, O 'Ali, those who are guided will be guided after I am gone." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4899.

16. "When I was taken on the Night Journey (*al-Isrâ'*), I saw written on the leg of the Throne: There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He is My chosen one among My creation, and I have supported him with 'Ali." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4902.

17. "Whoever would like to look at the deeds of Adam, the understanding of Nooh, the patience of Ibrâheem, the asceticism of Yaḥya and the strength of Moosa, let him look at 'Ali." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4903.

18. "You will fight those who recant and are unjust and rebellious, in the roads and on the banks of rivers and streams." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 907.

19. "This verse — ﴾O Messenger [Muhammad]! Proclaim [the Message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 67)* was revealed on the day of Ghadeer Khumm concerning 'Ali." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 4922.

20. "When the Messenger of Allah appointed 'Ali at Ghadeer Khumm and instructed that 'Ali should be in charge after him, this verse was revealed: ﴾This day, I have perfected your religion for you [and] completed My Favour upon you.﴿ *(Qur'an 5: 3)*" Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 4923.

21. "This is my brother, my appointed heir and my successor (caliph) among you, so listen to him and obey" — referring to 'Ali. Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 4932.

22. "I adjure you by Allah, is there anyone among you whom the Messenger of Allah took as a brother when he established ties of brotherhood among the Muslims — apart from me?" They said: No, by Allah. Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah,* no. 4949.

23. "There is no sword except Dhul-Fiqâr and no hero except 'Ali." False, falsely attributed to 'Ali. *Minhâj as-Sunnah,* 5/70.

24. "Love for 'Ali is a good deed that cannot be undermined by doing bad deeds alongside it, and hating him is a bad deed alongside which no good deed is to any avail." False, falsely attributed to 'Ali. *Minhâj as-Sunnah,* 5/73.

25. "The two weighty things are the Book of Allah, one side of which is in the hand of Allah and the other side of which is in

your hands; adhere to it and do not go astray. The other (weighty thing) is my family. The All Knowing [Allah] has told me that they (these two weighty things) will never be separated until they both come to me at the reservoir. I asked my Lord for that. So do not go ahead of them lest you be doomed, and do not fall behind lest you be doomed, and do not teach them because they know better than you." Weak. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4914.

26. "Knowing the family of Muhammad is salvation, loving the family of Muhammad is help to cross the path leading to paradise (that passes over hellfire, and which is found by disbelievers and sinners to be extremely sharp and narrow), supporting the family of Muhammad is protection against punishment." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4917.

27. "This is my brother, my appointed heir and successor (caliph) after I am gone, so listen to him and obey." This hadith is false in both text and chain of narration. As for the chain of narration, it includes 'Abdul-Ghaffâr ibn al-Qâsim, of whom aḍ-Dhahabi said: Abu Maryam al-Anṣâri was a Râfidi and not trustworthy. 'Ali ibn al-Madeeni said: He used to fabricate hadith. *Mizân al-I'tidâl*, 2/640.

28. "My appointed heir and confidant is 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib. The best of those I am leaving behind, who will fulfil my covenant and pay off my debts, is 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib." Narrated by al-Haythami in *Majma' az-Zawâ'id*, 9/14. He attributed it to aṭ-Ṭabarâni and said: Its chain of narration includes an-Nâṣiḥ ibn 'Abdullah, who is rejected.

29. "I am the house of Wisdom, and 'Ali is its door." Narrated by at-Tirmidhi and Abu Na'eem, who did not comment on at-

Tirmidhi's words: This is a strange munkar hadith... we do not know this hadith from any trustworthy narrator from Shurayk. No. 3723. Ibn al-Jawzi said: This is a fabricated hadith. *Mishkât al-Maṣâbeeḥ*, 3/1777. Ibn al-Jawzi deemed it to be a lie - *Al-Mawḍoo'ât*, 1/349.

30. "You, O 'Ali, and your party, ﴾they are the best of creatures﴿ *(Qur'an 98: 7)*." Its chain of narration includes Abu al-Jarood, Ziyâd ibn al-Mundhir al-Kufi, whom al-Ḥâfidh ibn Ḥajar called: a Râfidi whom Yaḥya ibn Ma'een deemed to be a liar. *At-Taqreeb*, no. 2101.

31. "Allah revealed to me three things concerning 'Ali: he is the leader of the believers, the leader of the pious and the leader of those with bright faces and limbs." Al-Ḥâkim said in *al-Manâqib*: Its chain of narration is sound. I say: Rather it is very weak and also interrupted. *Itḥâf al-Maharah*, 1/344. He said that 'Umar ibn al-Ḥuṣayn al-'Aqeeli and his shaykh Yaḥya ibn al-'Ala' ar-Râzi are both rejected. In fact, he stated clearly that this hadith is fabricated.

32. "What great news, O 'Ali. You have become our mawla and the mawla of every believing man and woman." Its chain of narration includes 'Ali ibn Zayd ibn Jad'an, of whom al-Jawzjâni said: His hadith is weak. *Ash-Shajarah fi Aḥwâl ar-Rijâl*, p. 194. Ibn al-Jawzi said in *al-'Ilal al-Mutanâhiyah fil-Aḥâdeeth al-Wâhiyah* (1/226): It is not permissible to quote this hadith as evidence. From that man back to Abu Hurayrah, all its narrators are weak. Al-Bazzâr said: A number of scholars spoke about it. *Kashf al-Astâr*, 490. Ad-Dâraquṭni said: It is not strong. *Sunan ad-Dâraquṭni*, 1/103.

33. "May Allah have mercy on 'Ali. O Allah, cause truth to be with him wherever he goes." Narrated by al-Ḥâkim, who said: It is

sound according to the conditions of the two Shaykhs [Bukhari and Muslim]. *Al-Mustadrak*, 3/125. Its chain of narration includes Nâfi' at-Tameemi. Aḍ-Dhahabi said, commenting on al-Ḥâkim: Al-Mukhtâr is worthless. Al-Ḥâfidh said: Al-Mukhtâr is weak. *At-Taqreeb*, p. 6522.

34. "'Ali is my brother in this world and the hereafter." Weak. Al-Albâni: *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 3801.

35. "'Ali is the gate of humility. Whoever enters it will be safe." Fabricated. Its chain of narration includes Ḥusayn al-Ashqar. Bukhari said: There is some doubt concerning it. *At-Tareekh al-Kabeer*, 2/2862. He said: He narrated strange things. *At-Tareekh as-Sagheer*, 2/319. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 3913.

36. "'Ali is the best of mankind. Whoever does not accept that has disbelieved." Fabricated. Al-Ḥâfidh ibn Ḥajar said: It was narrated by Ibn 'Adiy via several chains of narration, all of which are weak. *Tasdeed al-Qaws*, 3/89. Adh-Dhahabi said: This is a munkar hadith. Adh-Dhahabi also described this hadith as clearly false. *Mizân al-I'tidâl*, 1/521; Ibn al-Jawzi in *al-Mawḍoo'ât*, 1/348.

37. 'Â'ishah said: "I know that 'Ali is dearer to you than my father, two or three times." Weak. Al-Albâni: *Ḍa'eef Abi Dâwood*, p. 491.

38. "The likeness of my family is that of the ship of Nooh; whoever embarks on it will be safe, and whoever stays behind will drown." Narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarâni in *al-Kabeer*, 3/37; al-Haythami, 6/168. Its chain of narration includes 'Abdullah ibn Dâhir and al-Hasan ibn Abi Ja'far, who are both rejected. This was stated by al-Haythami.

39. "Whoever would like to live like me, die like me and dwell in the garden of eternity that my Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, has promised me, with trees that He planted with His hand, let him love 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib." Classed as sound by al-Ḥâkim, 3/128. Aḍ-Dhahabi commented: Its chain of narration includes al-Qâsim, who is rejected, and his shaykh, namely Yaḥya ibn al-'Ali al-Aslami, is weak. Al-Ḥâfidh said in *At-Taqreeb* (7677): He is Shia and weak. But he made a mistake in the name of al-Aslami, calling him al-Muḥâribi, and 'Abdul-Ḥusayn exploited that in the worse manner in *al-Murâji'ât.*

40. "Allah never put anything in my heart but I put it in 'Ali's heart." Fabricated. *Al-Mawḍoo'ât,* 1/131; *Asas aṭ-Ṭâlib,* no. 1262.

41. "The one who loves you loves me, and the one who loves me loves Allah. The one who hates you hates me, and the one who hates me hates Allah." Al-Ḥâfidh said: This was narrated by Ibn 'Adiy, but it is false. *Lisân al-Mizân,* 2/109.

42. "O 'Ali, be of good cheer, for you and your companions and your party will be in paradise. O 'Ali, did you pray the afternoon prayer?" He said no. He said: "O Allah, You know that he was busy serving You and Your Messenger, so put the sun back for him." So Allah (ﷻ) brought it back for him, and 'Ali prayed, then the sun set.

* * *

Glossary of Islamic terms*

abu (or abi)	أبو، أبي	father (of)
Ahl al-Bayt	أهل البيت	the people of the Prophet's household or family
ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah	أهل السنّة والجماعة	'people of the Sunnah and the community'
alḥamdulillâh	الحمد لله	all praise is for Allah
Allâhu akbar	اللّه أكبر	Allah is the Greatest
âmeen	آمين	O Allah, accept our invocation; amen
Amir al-Mu'mineen	أمير المؤمنين	the leader of the Muslims; *lit*: 'the commander of the faithful'
Anṣâr	أنصار	'helpers': the Muslim citizens of Madinah who gave refuge to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other Muslim emigrants from Makkah
'aqeedah (pl. 'aqâ'id)	عقيدة	belief system that is based upon a firm conviction in all the fundamentals of faith and of the oneness of Allah; firm creed that one's heart is fixed upon without any wavering or doubt, and that excludes any supposition, doubt or suspicion

* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (i.e. is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

as-salâmu 'alaykum	السلام عليكم	a greeting, which means 'peace'
'awrah	عورة	the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view; for males it is the area between the navel and the knees, and for females it is everything except the hands and the face
banu (or bani)	بنو، بني	*lit.* 'children (of)'; *usu.* referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor
Baqee' Cemetery	البقيع	the cemetery located next to the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, in which many of the Prophet's companions and family members are buried
bay'at as-Saqeefah	بيعة السّقيفة	The oath of allegiance given to Abu Bakr as the new leader of the Muslims: this took place at a meeting in Saqeefah after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ)
da'wah	دعوة	disseminating the teachings of Islam and calling people to accept and embrace Islam
dhimmi	ذمّي	protected or covenanted people; non-Muslims who must pay the jizyah in lieu of zakât
dirham	درهم	a silver coin; a unit of currency
Eid ('eed)	عيد	*lit.* festival; the two celebrations: one at the end of Ramadan and the other at the culmination of the Hajj
fatwa (fatwah)	فتوة	religious decision or decree

fay'	فيء	what Muslims acquire of the wealth of disbelievers without fighting or jihad
fiqh	فقه	Islamic jurisprudence; understanding or interpreting Islamic law
fitnah	فتنة	*lit.* trial, temptation; (attempting to sow) discord between Muslims
ghaneemah	غنيمة	what Muslims acquire of the wealth of those who fight them and what they capture in battle of horses and mounts; war booty
ghareeb	غريب	*lit.* 'strange' or 'unusual': a category of hadith in which at some points in its chain there is only one narrator
ghusl	غسل	ritual shower necessary after a major impurity, e.g., after sexual intercourse or at the end of the menstrual period
ḥadd	حدّ	type of punishment prescribed by Allah
Hadith (ḥadeeth)	حديث	the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law
hadith (ḥadeeth)	حديث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
Al-Ḥâfidh	الحافظ	'the one who has memorized (the Qur'an)': an honorific title
hajj (ḥajj)	حج	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Ka'bah at Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his/her lifetime

halal (*ḥalâl*)	حلال	permitted according to Islamic law
ḥarâm	حرام	forbidden according to Islamic law
Ḥijâz	حجاز	the Western region of the Arabian Peninsula that includes Makkah and Madinah
Hijrah	هجرة	migration: *esp*. the migration from Makkah to Madinah by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions that marks the start of the Islamic calendar
ḥoor 'een	حور العين	plural of (gazelle-like) + *'ayn* (eye); houris, the 'firm-breasted' women with beautiful eyes, promised to male believers in paradise
Iblees	إبليس	another name for Satan in Arabic
'iddah	عدّة	the waiting period after a woman is widowed or divorced, in which she is not allowed to remarry, in order to ascertain whether or not she is pregnant with the child of her late or ex-husband
ijtihâd	إجتهاد	to use one's knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to derive rulings on matters not specifically mentioned in either source of Islamic law
innâ lillâhi wa innâ ilayhi râji'oon	إنّا للّه وإنّا إليه راجعون	'to Allah we belong and to Him is our return'; a phrase uttered during times of difficulty [from Soorat al-Baqarah (2: 156)]
inshallah	أن شاءاللّه	God willing

i'tikâf	إعتكاف	seclusion in the mosque solely for the purpose of worship
jâhiliyyah	جاهلية	*lit.* 'ignorance'; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam
Jibreel	جبريل	the Arabic name for Gabriel (ﷺ), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communication from Allah to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)
jihad *(jihâd)*	جهاد	struggle or striving (in Allah's cause)
jinn *(plural of jinni)*	جن	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'; They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some people try to 'foretell' the future by contacting a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can tell them what will happen in the future, near or far, or that the jinn can provide people with riches or some sort of power.
Kaaba *(Ka'bah)*	الكعبة	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, and which Muslims face wherever they pray
khaleel	خليل	a very close friend
khazeerah	خزيرة	a dish prepared by cutting meat into small pieces and covering it with water. When the meat is almost done, some

		flour is sprinkled on to it (and cooked for a while).
khuff	خف	a type of footwear worn for travelling, usually made of leather. In some cases, it is permissible to wipe over them when making ablutions for prayer, instead of taking them off and washing the feet
kunyah	كنية	an honorary name usually composed of Abu (father of) or Umm (mother of) and the name of the first son or first child
lâ ilâha illâ Allâh	لا إله إلى اللّٰه	there is none worthy of worship other than Allah
madh-hab	مذهب	school of juristic thought
Maghreb	مغرب	The Maghreb literally means the place of sunset, or the west. It is also used to refer to the countries of North Africa (excluding Egypt), or specifically to Morocco
mahr	مهر	obligatory marriage gift presented by the groom to the bride, and a necessary stipulation of the marriage contract
maḥram	محرم	a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may never marry due to the close blood or marriage relationship. e.g., father, brother, son, uncle, and father-in-law
maqâm Ibrâheem	مقام إبراهيم	the Station of Abraham (Ibrâheem) next to the Ka'bah

al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm	المسجد الحرام	the Sacred Mosque in Makkah where the Kaaba is situated
mawla	مولى	master, protector, helper or friend
mawṣool	موصول	*lit.* 'connected': a term used by Hadith scholars to describe a narration with an uninterrupted chain of narrators
minbar	منبر	raised pulpit in a mosque from which sermons are presented; The pulpit in a mosque is different from that in a church. The pulpit in a mosque is basically a raised platform at the top of a set of steps, and it usually has a railing for the imam or speaker to lean on. This is why one can speak of 'sitting on the pulpit', and 'ascending the pulpit'
mubâhalah	مباهلة	a method of resolving religious disputes in which both parties come together to pray and invoke the curse of Allah on the side that is lying
mudd	مدّ	a measure of volume: approx. what one's two hands can scoop up
Muhâjiroon (or Muhâjireen)	مهاجرون	*lit.* emigrants (of any kind); in Islamic discourse this term is used to refer to people who emigrate to safeguard their religion, and specifically, the Muslims who migrated with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah
mujâhid (pl. mujâhideen)	مجاهد	one who strives in the way of Allah; a fighter in jihad

munkar منكر a category of hadith which is related by only one narrator, who is neither upright nor precise; technically, it is a weak hadith that contradicts an authentic hadith

mursal مرسل a category of hadith: a narration that a tâbi'ee ascribes to the Prophet (ﷺ) without mentioning the Companion that he took it from

muṣḥaf مصحف copy of the Arabic text of the Qur'an that is neither accompanied by commentary nor translated

musnad مسند a compilation (made by his student) of the hadiths related by an Imam

mutawâtir متواتر a category of hadith describing narrations that are related by a group of upright and trustworthy narrators who also related from a group of upright and trustworthy narrators, and so on, until the narration ends at the Prophet (ﷺ)

prophethood The term 'prophethood' is not in the English dictionary, but is an invented term, formed along the pattern of 'childhood' and 'motherhood', as a noun reflecting a particular state of being. It is meant to translate the meaning of the Arabic word nubuwwah, which has no one-word equivalent in English, but which could be translated as meaning 'the state of being a prophet', and is also used to

		refer to 'all things that have to do with being a prophet'. The term 'prophethood' has since become common in English-language Islamic discourse
qibla (qiblah)	القبلة	the bearing from the Kaaba to any point on Earth; the direction that all Muslims must face in prayer
qiyâm al-layl	قيام الليل	*lit.* 'standing the night'; getting up to pray supererogatory prayers during the late night and early morning before fajr
raj'ah	رجعة	the Shiite belief that some people will be brought back to this life from the dead, in their original forms, before the Day of Resurrection
raka'ah (pl. raka'ât)	ركعة	a unit of the formal prayer (ṣalât)
Ramadan (Ramaḍân)	رمضان	the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting; the month in which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed
ar-rijs	رجس	dirt or filth; also used to refer to evil deeds and sins, prohibited food and drink, polytheism and other prohibited acts
rukoo'	ركوع	the act of bowing (in prayer)
ṣâ'	صاع	a measurement roughly equivalent to 3 kg, or four times the volume of a *mudd*
Ṣafâ	الصفى	one of the two hills between which pilgrims must hurry back and forth

		during the rites of the Hajj and the 'umrah
ṣaḥeeḥ	صحيح	a grade of hadith: sound or authentic
salâm	السلام	peace; the greeting of peace
ṣalât or ṣalâh	صلاة	formal prayer: a combination of physical postures, recitation and supplication
shaykh	شيخ	teacher, mentor; scholar
shirk	الشرك	associating partners with Allah
shu'oobiyyah	شعوبية	Derived from the Arabic word *sha'b* meaning people, nation, or race: the Shu'oobiyyah movement advocated equality of Arabs and non-Arabs. The term is often used by Arabs in a more specific context that refers to the resentment of Arabs by Persians that occurred in the 9th and 10th centuries CE
soorah or soorat	سورة	chapter of the Qur'an
Sunnah	سنّة	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
tâbi'oon (sg. tâbi'ee)	التابعون	those who knew or met any of the Companions and transmitted hadiths from them
tafseer	تفسير	exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings (*usu.* of Qur'anic verses)

ṭâghoot	طاغوت	idols; everything evil that is worshipped
takbeer	تكبير	the act of saying *Allâhu akbar*
taqiyyah	تقية	Dissimulation of or deception about one's religious beliefs, especially in times of danger or persecution
taqwâ	التقوى	fearful awareness of Allah; being mindful of Allah; pious dedication; being careful not to transgress the bounds set by Allah
ṭawâf	طواف	circumambulation of the Ka'bah
tawḥeed	التوحيد	the Oneness of Allah: that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners
thareed	ثريد	a dish made from pieces of flat bread soaked in a meat stew
Ummah	أمّة	community or nation: *usu.* used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims
'umrah	عمرة	a minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah
unseen		a term used to denote phenomena or aspects that cannot be known using ordinary human faculties
wali	ولي	friend and helper (of Allah)
wasimah	وسمة	a plant or tree found in Yemen, the leaves of which are used for dyeing hair
witr	وتر	*lit.* an odd number: a single unit of supererogatory prayer, to be prayed any time after the evening (*'ishâ'*)

		prayer and before the call for the dawn prayer
wuḍoo'	وضوء	ablution required before prayer or touching the Qur'an
zakât (*zakâh or zakât*)	زكاة	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth payable by Muslims and to be distributed to other Muslims who qualify as recipients